

THE
SPIRIT
OF THE
SERVICE

EDITH
ELMER
WOOD





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THE SPIRIT OF THE SERVICE







“ ‘DO THEY WORRY YOU — THESE THINGS?’ ”

THE SPIRIT OF THE SERVICE

BY

EDITH ELMER WOOD

ILLUSTRATED BY

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The Spirit of the Service

CHAPTER I

“CAPTAIN, Mr. O’Meara would like to see you, sir,” whispered the messenger, with an air of mystery and importance.

“O’Meara?”

Captain Cartwright’s voice was at its normal pitch and showed no recognition of the name’s significance.

“John C. O’Meara, you know.”

A prince of the blood could not have been announced with more unction.

“Who’s he?”

For a moment the messenger stared at his chief, aghast at such a revelation of ignorance. There was nothing to indicate that the Captain was joking, and, indeed, facetiousness with his subordinates was not among his characteristics.

"Why, he's the strongest ward boss on this side of the river, sir," was the anxiously whispered response. "He has the naming of every officeholder from the congressman down, and Senator Flint does everything he says."

"What does he want here?"

The Captain's voice had acquired a ring of severity before which the messenger quailed.

"I don't know, sir," he murmured apologetically.

"Bring him in," said the Captain, shortly.

Mr. John C. O'Meara had heavy features and small eyes set too close together, but his face was surprisingly illuminated when he smiled, and the slight brogue in his voice was rather pleasant. He appeared, either from obtuseness or from policy, perfectly unconscious of Captain Cartwright's forbidding manner, and greeted him with cordiality a shade excessive.

The Captain instinctively withdrew still farther into his shell.

"May I be shuttin' this?" asked the visitor, proceeding, as he spoke, to close the door into

the adjoining office. "I've a most annoyin' cold."

"The draught comes from the window," said the Captain. "Robinson, close the window and open that door again."

Mr. O'Meara looked grieved for a moment, then he smiled.

"I've somethin' to say that's a trifle confidential," he suggested. "Hadn't we better —"

"No," said the Captain, and his tone was final.

"Just as you say."

The politician, with a gently deprecatory wave of the hand, took a chair near the corner of the Captain's desk.

"You're runnin' a very important branch of the navy-yard work, Captain Cartwright," he said. "You employ a large number of men. You're a stranger here, and it's not to be expected you'd have much personal knowledge of the men on your pay-roll. The best of us makes mistakes now and then annyhow. That's right, ain't it?"

"It seems to be. Well?"

"I'm takin' the liberty of an old risidint, Captain, to drop in and offer you a bit of a suggestion."

"I don't understand."

The Captain's antagonism was unmistakable, but Mr. O'Meara still ignored it, and hitching his chair a trifle closer, continued in a tone at once soothing and confidential:—

"It's about that man Klein you bounced the other day. 'Tain't surprisin' you was fooled by his name. But his political convictions have lifted him above the prejudices of his race, and I'm able to testify most positive to his bein' as good a Dimocrat as walks."

"Is that all?"

"He's a man of influence, sir; one of the best workers in the warrd."

"He was one of the worst workers in the machine shop. That's why he was discharged."

"Did you observe his shortcomin's yourself, Captain, or did you hear of 'em from annother?"

"Both."

"Now, did the one that you got your information from happen to be the foreman?"

"Naturally. It's his business to report inefficiency."

"Ah, there you've uncovered the nigger in the wood-pile, my dear sir! That foreman is a Republican, and a most objectionable one."

"It's no concern of mine what he is, so long as he does his work. You don't appear to understand that this yard is under civil-service rules."

"Yes, yes, I know," the visitor hastened to say, "and it's the very point I'm comin' at. I'm not sayin' Weinhart ain't a smart worrkman all right, but he's a smart politician, too, and it's politics, not worrk, that's set him against Klein, and set him the harder for them both bein' Dutch, and don't you ferget it! Klein played a nate little trrick on him at the primaries last month, and he's been layin' for him iver sinse. It's revenge that's actuatin' the man, sir, a clear case of political persecution. And that ain't all either. Weinhart's

got his own brother-in-law on the waitin' list. Fleischmann's his name, and he's figurin' to work him into Klein's job. Oh, he's the early bird, all right ! It's a cold day when Weinhardt gits left, but I'm thinkin' you're the man to see through his desatefulness."

This delicate compliment produced a twinkle of amusement in the Captain's eyes, but no relaxation of his firm-set lips. He jotted down a memorandum on a pad.

"I will look into your charges," he said. "I tell you frankly that I don't believe there is anything in them ; but if there is, I shall know what action to take. There are to be no politics in my department, one way or the other."

"That's right, that's right," agreed Mr. O'Meara, heartily. "And thank you, very much."

"There is no occasion for it," said the Captain, with grave but distant civility.

"Just one thing more, Captain. There's a man registered on the applicants' list that I want to speak a good word for."

"They all take their turn."

"Yes, of course; but you and me knows there's ways of hurryin' the turn."

"Not in *my* department."

"If number two on the list is a better worrkman than number one, which gits the job?"

"The man that's first on the list. The head of department has no power of selection. All he can do is to reject the manifestly unfit. The classification is done by the labor board when the applicant registers."

Mr. O'Meara beamed approval.

"I ain't quarrelin' with your fancy names for things, Captain. 'Rejectin' of the unfit' will do the trrick all right, I guess. Of course, there's got to be *some*thin'. It's business and it's common sinse. You don't fill up your shops with all the bums and jays that happen to write their names down first. What you want is the best men. The best's none too good for you, I take it. Now, I can ricom-mend this man as a first-class electrician, and I happen to know he's in nade of a job. We

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should think of that, too, when we can — the wife and the little ones, you know.”

He paused, but Captain Cartwright made no response.

“ I told him to mention my name to you, but — ”

Captain Cartwright leaned forward, resting his elbow on the desk, and looked his visitor squarely in the eyes.

“ Is *his* name Callahan? ”

“ Yes, sir, that’s the man.”

“ Well, you can inform your friend Mr. Callahan that political wire-pulling won’t help him to employment in this yard. If he takes my advice, he’ll withdraw his name from the applicants’ list altogether. I don’t think he’ll get a job even when his turn comes. He’s not the sort of man we want. I think he knows my sentiments, though. I’ve expressed them to him. If I had known you were the man he was talking about, I should have declined to see you this morning.”

The politician’s face hardened. He controlled himself with an effort.

"I don't think you understand," he said with elaborate patience.

"I don't think I care to."

"One moment," deprecated the Irishman. "Callahan ain't just an old friend of mine,— though he's that too,— but Congressman Jerry Smith's under very considerrable obligations to him and is very much interrested in gettin' him good employment."

Captain Cartwright pushed back his chair impatiently.

"That's a matter that doesn't concern me in the least—or interest me," he said shortly.

There was a momentary revelation of the savage in the glint of Mr. O'Meara's small eyes, then the curtain fell again. But it left his face very red.

"It may interrest ye more than ye think before ye're through," he sneered, his brogue thickening as he lost control of his temper.

Captain Cartwright rose.

"We will call this interview closed," he said quietly.

The visitor rose too, choking and spluttering with rage.

"I believe ye're a Republican yersilf!" he exclaimed, with the air of one making a most damaging accusation.

The crudeness of the man's point of view was so enormous that the Captain smiled.

"Show the gentleman to the door, Robinson," he said suavely, and sitting down at his desk again, took up the specifications for dynamos he had been examining before he was interrupted.

The messenger, awestruck between the warring potentates, tiptoed to the door and opened it in a gingerly fashion.

The Captain's smile and tone had stung the politician to fury.

"Ye damned hypocritical snob!" he shouted, stopping in the doorway to shake his fist. "Ye think ye can insult me because I'm a plain man of the people and don't parley voo fransay and ttrain with the Four Hundred! I'll show ye what I can do! Ye'll be laughin' out o' the other side o' yer

mouth before Congressman Smith and Senator Flint and Johnnie O'Meara gits through with ye!"

The Captain looked up suddenly from his papers.

"That will do," he said, with a quarter-deck ring of authority. And something in the Irishman responded to it, carrying him out of the door without another word.

The Captain went on with the specifications, but Mr. O'Meara's visit had annoyed him so thoroughly that he found it hard to settle down to his work.

Presently the messenger opened the door.

"Here's a gentleman to see you, sir," he said, grinning.

The Captain turned belligerently to face another politician, then his frown relaxed.

"Why, hello, Wiggles, what are you doing here?"

"He *would* come, sir; I couldn't do anything with him," said his nurse, apologetically, from the rear.

Stephen Van Alen Whittemore, otherwise

known as Wiggles, was between two and three years old and highly picturesque. Just now he was a symphony in soft browns. He wore a long tan-colored cloth coat trimmed with beaver and a velvet hat of a slightly darker shade, under which a circle of tawny curls framed his chubby face. His eyes were dancing roguishly with the triumph of having carried his point over the nurse's veto.

"W'iggles tum see Dwanfadder," he said pleasantly.

There was, in the Captain's manner, as he set the child on his knee, a peculiar tenderness which no one but Wiggles had the power to evoke—a tenderness which seemed to hold, along with the love, a pity too deep for words. For the sight of the boy always brought before him the image of his daughter, and the pity was not only for the little one's motherlessness, but because his coming into the world had cost his mother her life. The fact that Wiggles was quite unconscious of any responsibility in the matter and would probably always remain so, did not in the

least detract from the infinite compassion his grandfather felt for him.

"W'iggles want wed penthil," said the little one, stroking his grandfather's cheek.

"All right, my boy. Here's a red pencil. Now you'd better run along with Mollie. Grandfather's busy."

But Wiggles resisted, by an ingenious stiffening of his body, the attempt to set him down on the floor.

"W'iggles want boo penthil too," he said with great earnestness.

"Humph," observed the grandfather, affecting sternness, "you want a great deal, Wiggles."

Wiggles said nothing, but looked expectant. He had the face of a Perugino cherub.

"If I give you a blue pencil, will you run away with Mollie like a good boy?"

"Yas," he agreed solemnly.

The blue pencil was handed to him and Wiggles was set down on the floor.

But he still stood there.

"W'iggles want g'een penthil," he said with angelic cadences in his voice.

"Wiggles, I haven't got any green pencils, and I wouldn't give you one if I had."

Wiggles's lip quivered.

"You said you would run away like a good boy if I gave you the blue pencil. That's a promise. I expect you to behave like an officer and a gentleman."

Wiggles gazed at him doubtfully.

"Here's some paper to make pictures on with the red pencil and the blue pencil. Good-by, my boy. Now go."

Wiggles gathered up his booty and departed, whether because he wished to be an officer and a gentleman or because his grandfather had said that he didn't have any green pencils, will probably never be known. Wiggles was quite capable of being moved by either consideration.

The Captain turned back to his desk in a thoroughly good humor. The earlier unpleasant incident was forgotten. The child had put the world in tune again.

CHAPTER II

THE Cartwrights were in no sense society people. This was partly from lack of inclination and partly from lack of funds. The art of making a big show on a small expenditure and of keeping in step with people whose income was several times larger than theirs, was quite unknown to them. Yet they had a rather wide circle of friends, whom they delighted to gather around them.

Their entertaining usually took the shape of dinners, small and informal enough not to overtax the resources of their modest establishment. The employment of one-night chefs and butlers — that favorite device of limited pocketbooks — they held in peculiar abhorrence. What their cook and waitress could not carry out they never attempted. But they had the dinner-giving talent, which is a thing by itself.

The present little dinner was in honor of the two girls staying with them, who had been their daughter's most cherished friends. The Cartwrights had started out to love them for Elizabeth's sake and had ended by loving them for their own.

Although they knew each other well by name through their common friend, the two had never met until the beginning of this visit, but had already become the best of good comrades in spite of, or on account of, their wide divergence in type. They were alike only in their loyalty to Elizabeth and in belonging to the minority who leave the world better—if ever so little—than they found it. Sue Ballinger was a Californian of commanding figure and warm blond coloring, whose virtues and faults were on a generous scale. She was fairly bursting with vitality, with energy both mental and physical, with enthusiasms of all sorts. Yet her admirable common sense acted as a balance wheel and kept her from the gushing, the sentimental, or the merely eccentric. Barbara Thornhill

was a frail little thing, all eyes, who looked like a disembodied spirit. She was a bundle of reserves and shynesses, concealed incongruously enough under an assumption of cynicism, which imposed on few, but seemed to be the only condition under which she could bring herself into communication with her fellow-mortals at all.

The two girls appeared downstairs a few minutes before the arrival of the outside guests. Mrs. Cartwright was still hovering in and out of the dining room, putting a touch to the table or giving some final directions to the waitress. She was always nervous till the last moment. Some generals are said to be like that.

"Will the men be in uniform, Mrs. Cartwright?" Sue asked. Neither of the girls was used to navy-yard life and both took an interest in its externalities.

"I'm afraid not."

"Too bad! If they wear Tuxedos, they'll be mere ordinary mortals."

"My heart is safe, then, for this occasion," murmured Barbara, flippantly.

"I wish it weren't," laughed Sue, laying her hands on Barbara's shoulders. "I should like tremendously to see you lose your grip and fall in love — idiotically, inanely, in love, you know."

Barbara made a wry face.

"I dare say I'd do it that way, if I did it at all," she said.

Captain Cartwright came into the room.

"Here's the Captain. He doesn't look commonplace in a dinner-coat. Perhaps the others won't either," Sue exclaimed hopefully.

"Oh, *he* couldn't look commonplace in *anything*," returned Barbara, "but there are no more like the Captain."

His dark eyes flashed at the girl, full of pleasure. He bent over her hand and lifted it to his lips with fine courtliness.

"This is compensation for my gray hairs," he said gallantly.

The guests began to arrive, Lieutenant McMasters and Ensign Ferris, then Lieutenant and Mrs. Janvier. There were no more. This was a household which clung to the

classical limitation concerning the number of the muses.

The table was round. It had been one of Mrs. Cartwright's few extravagances. There was no dazzle of cut glass and silverware. The slender-stemmed glass vase in the centre, with its gracefully curving red carnations, gave the keynote of artistic simplicity. There were only two kinds of wine, a claret and a sherry, but they were good.

Sue and Barbara had met all the guests before except Mr. McMasters. He was on the Duluth, a ship that had just come in.

"Do you still find navy-yard life so picturesque, Miss Ballinger?" asked Mrs. Janvier.

"Yes, indeed," cried Sue, "I am simply revelling in it! I want to paint pictures of it and write poems about it all the time. It doesn't seem like America at all. It's a glimpse into another world. It doesn't seem like the end of the nineteenth century either. I feel as if I had been swept back into the Middle Ages."

"And we flattered ourselves we were strictly up to date!" laughed Captain Cartwright.

Mr. McMasters turned to the girl beside him with awakened attention.

"That's very interesting," he said. "It's all such a matter of course and of daily routine to us that it's hard to realize we look at all extraordinary to outsiders."

"You don't," interrupted Barbara, incisively. "It's only the gold lace and buttons."

He smiled indulgently, as one might at a child. But before he could explain, Sue had swept in.

"It's not so external as all that, Barbara. It's not just their uniforms that are so strange to us. It's their whole point of view, their whole standard of life, what the Captain calls the spirit of the service. You see," she went on, looking around the table, "I've been brought up in a world whose ideals are commercial. Almost all the people I know reckon life by dollars and cents. The others judge it by intellectual standards. Barbara is one of that sort. Up in New England, where she comes

from, they still believe in plain living and high thinking."

"That's her amiable little theory," whispered Barbara in an audible aside. "It's easy to see she's never been there."

"Never mind about localities, then. But we both know those two standards and we don't know any other. Now here we drop into a world whose ideals are purely military. I thought that spirit was dead and buried centuries ago, and here it is flourishing before my eyes."

"Just what do you mean by the military spirit, Miss Ballinger?" asked Mr. McMassters, with the air of deferential interest which is the sincerest flattery.

Sue considered.

"Well, there's the loyalty first—not simply to the country. We're all patriotic."

"According to our lights," Barbara interpolated.

"Yes, according to our lights. But the naval officer's loyalty has to include the whole hierarchy of government—at least his branch of the government."

"They are his superior officers," explained Captain Cartwright.

"Exactly, but the rest of us don't revere our superior officers."

"Neither do we, necessarily."

"But if you don't, you keep your opinion to yourselves."

"We ought to, but we sometimes don't."

"I am speaking of ideals."

"Go on. It's very nice about the loyalty, but I doubt if we have a monopoly of the quality."

"There's the army," suggested Mr. Ferris, with an effort after fairness so elaborate that it produced a ripple of laughter among the navy people.

"Why, the army and navy are all the same, aren't they!" asked Sue, in some bewilderment.

"Heavens, no!" exclaimed Mr. Janvier. "Those poor devils never go to sea."

"Billy, do behave yourself," admonished his wife.

"They're the same for the purposes of

your analysis, I think," said the Captain. "But I hope there's some loyalty left in civil life."

"Personal loyalty here and there, yes; but hardly ex-officio loyalty to superiors as such."

"It sounds rather atavistic, put that way, doesn't it?" commented Mr. McMasters.

"Un-American, anyhow," said Mrs. Janvier. "I see what she means. But go on."

"Then there are the two complementary habits of command and obedience, — the kind that doesn't argue, you know.

" 'Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die,' "

quoted Mr. Janvier with mock-heroic emphasis.

"The obedience part is un-American enough, we'll all admit," said Mrs. Cartwright. "But the command — aren't we a nation of sovereigns?"

"That only applies to the feminine half of the community," observed the Captain, and they all laughed.

"Now don't let's get away from the point. This is interesting," persisted Mrs. Janvier. "You have the floor, Miss Ballinger."

"There's the combativeness of course," Sue began, but was interrupted by a chorus of protests.

"Our lives are not half so combative as those of your friends in the world of commerce," urged the Captain.

"You said that because you thought it ought to be so, Sue, not because you had observed it," remarked Barbara, dryly. "They are really a flock of doves cooing good will to all men."

"Perhaps the wars of commerce are bit-
terer than your sort."

"It's always so when men risk their fortunes instead of their lives," murmured Barbara.

"But I insist that, as your whole aim and excuse for being is to fight successful wars, you *must* have a combative spirit. Of course I don't mean that you are quarrelsome as individuals."

"Our highest mission, Miss Ballinger, is to preserve peace," said Mr. McMasters, "not to provoke wars."

"Not to provoke wars, but to fight them when they come," corrected the Captain. "She's right about that. We mustn't forget our fundamental *raison d'être*."

"The Captain can talk," said Mr. Janvier. "He was in the Civil War. He's the only one of us who ever smelt powder—except in target practice."

"Not quite so bad as that. You were in the Korean expedition yourself, weren't you, Janvier?" suggested Mr. McMasters.

"That opera bouffe? Yes, but you don't call that war, do you? You were with the guard landed at Panama to keep the Isthmus open, weren't you, if it comes to that?"

"Mere police work," said the other regretfully.

"I haven't ever been under fire at all," lamented Mr. Ferris in a tone of utter mournfulness.

"Never mind, sonny, it's not your fault,"

Mr. Janvier encouraged him. "It will be your turn some day."

"Do you know what you've all been doing?" cried Sue, delightedly. "You've been proving my point for me. You every one of you envy the Captain because he was in the Civil War. Confess that you will all be delighted if this Venezuelan boundary muddle should land us in a war with England!"

"Of course," said Mr. Janvier.

"Billy!" cried his wife, in a shocked tone.

"*No!*" roared Captain Cartwright, bringing his fist down on the table in a way that shook the wine-glasses. "No sane man who loves his country wishes for that. We are utterly unprepared for it. We should be crushingly defeated."

The three younger officers all leaned forward to protest, but Captain Cartwright gave them no chance to speak.

"We can handle an enemy of our own size. We aren't afraid to have the odds a

little against us. We might manage two for one at a pinch. But this is too overwhelming. We should be wiped off the face of the earth. If it has to come," — his voice dropped to the low pitch of solemnity, — "we shall do our best. We shall not be disgraced. We shall simply be annihilated."

Then, all at once, his voice fell back into its usual suavity, and the amused twinkle returned to his eyes.

"Are you all so tired of life?" he said, looking around at the younger men.

Mr. McMasters and Mr. Janvier laughed and said nothing. Mr. Ferris was still quivering to get in his word.

"But, Captain, with all our harbors protected by torpedoes, and Canada so open to an attack by land—" he began earnestly.

"The navy would be wiped off the face of the earth, and every man in it who did his duty would be down among the fishes," exclaimed the Captain, his voice rising again.

"But, Captain —"

"We should have done what we could, have sold our lives as dearly as possible, but there could be only one end."

"My dear, we're all waiting for you to carve those ducks," said his wife.

"Why, to be sure," he laughed, beginning to ply the carving knife and fork that he had unconsciously picked up and laid down half a dozen times.

"For Heaven's sake, don't say anything more, Mr. Ferris," Mrs. Janvier whispered to him. "We want our ducks, you know."

Mr. Ferris subsided reluctantly. He was young and took himself with unnecessary seriousness.

"Do you regard war as a relic of barbarism, Miss Ballinger?" Mr. McMasters asked.

"Of course I do. Don't you?"

"On the contrary. I think it's been one of the greatest civilizing forces in the history of the world."

There was a little murmur of interest.

"I'm not prepared to admit that," said the Captain; "but it's a necessary evil, and while

human nature remains human nature, we shall never learn to do without it."

"Taken in the large, and with proper perspective, I don't believe it's an evil, Captain," said the younger man. "It's like medicine. It's unpleasant to take, but it's beneficial in the end. We should all become sunk in a slough of commercialism if we didn't have a war once in a generation to stir our nobler impulses."

"Beautiful!" exclaimed Sue, with clasped hands. "You people are an epic poem in the midst of an age of prose."

For a moment Mr. McMasters looked annoyed.

"You would find us prosaic enough, if you knew us better," said the Captain.

"She would find the book-keepers in her father's bank equally heroic," Barbara asserted, "if her insight was only keen enough to get beyond the stage settings."

"No, no, *no!*" protested Sue. "Their chief hope and ambition is to get rich. They wouldn't say so, perhaps, if you asked them.

They would hedge against failure by saying that all they wanted was to make a living. And if you asked a naval officer, he might say all he wanted was to get along without discrediting his uniform. He wouldn't acknowledge that he hoped to become famous some day. But he *does* — just as the man in civil life hopes to become rich."

"*Do* you all hope to become famous?" laughed Mrs. Janvier, looking from one to another of the navy men.

"You needn't deny it," said Sue, with the rapt air of a prophetess, "*I know.*"

They all laughed, but no one denied it.

"There are a certain number of authors, artists, and scientists who prefer fame to wealth," suggested Mrs. Cartwright.

"Oh, of course."

"And the hope of glory is hardly the highest possible animating motive, anyhow," ventured Mr. McMasters.

"Certainly not. I wasn't trying to credit you with the highest possible motives. Glory, as an incentive, is just as selfish as money, but

it's much more picturesque, and lends itself much better to the purposes of epic poetry, which is what we were talking about."

"There are scientists," said Mr. Ferris, earnestly, "who work only for the love of truth. There are artists who believe in art for art's own sake."

"*They* say so," Barbara murmured, "and they surely ought to know."

"Don't *you* believe so, Miss Thornhill?" he asked in a grieved tone.

"Dear me, no," she bantered. "Some egotism is more refined, some less, but it's the ruling force everywhere."

"How about those who give up everything, who devote their lives to the service of others — Sisters of Charity, for instance?"

"The vanity of renunciation," said the girl, "or else they are long-headed enough to keep their bank accounts in the next world."

Mr. Ferris looked unspeakably shocked.

"I should be very sorry to think so meanly of my fellow men and women," he said soberly.

"Mr. Ferris," broke in Sue across the table, "don't let her deceive you. She is just the girl to become a Sister of Charity and exile herself to a leper colony."

"Don't be so graphic, Sue," said Barbara with a little shiver. "That would be so horribly unpleasant."

Mr. Ferris looked in some bewilderment from one to the other. He had been inclined to admire Barbara very much, but her psychological subtleties were too much for him. He was a literal and earnest youth himself, wholly free from complexities.

"Well," observed Mr. McMasters, reverting to the original theme, "Miss Ballinger might as well be generous and fit us out with a sense of duty or some other everyday motive force, for I don't see how we are to pursue our favorite loadstar of martial renown. The Captain won't let us fight England, and there isn't any other possible enemy in sight."

"Yes, there is," said the Captain, with sudden earnestness. "There is another enemy in

sight, and there will be war before the close of the century."

"With whom?" cried Mr. Ferris.

"Germany?" suggested Mr. Janvier.

"That will come later," said the Captain, with quiet conviction.

"Spain, then," said Mr. McMasters.

"Of course."

"Oh, no!"

"Never!"

"Why should we go to war with Spain?"

"It's inevitable. The never-ending insurrection in Cuba is an abscess—in our neighbor's flesh, it's true, but so close to ours that we've got to cut it out as a measure of self-protection."

"The mass of our people don't care enough about it to fight."

"Wait, and see."

"It isn't any of our business. Why should we interfere?"

"'Am I my brother's keeper?' That's what Cain said."

"We don't want Cuba."

"I didn't say we did."

"Would you have us fight to help those half-breeds gain their independence? What good would it do them?"

"I didn't say I wished it. I said it was inevitable."

"There'll not be much glory in fighting Spain," said Mr. McMasters. "The enemy's too weak."

"Ship for ship, we are very evenly matched," asserted the Captain. "There is no other navy so nearly equal to ours."

"On paper, yes."

"Don't make the mistake of despising your adversaries."

"I don't despise them, Captain. I know them too well for that. I know their individual gallantry and their collective ineffectiveness."

"We shall see!" cried the host, pushing back his chair and rising to let the ladies pass out. "I prophesy that the war will not be lacking in glory!"

"I hope you'll all get the thanks of Con-



“‘I HOPE YOU’LL ALL GET THE THANKS OF CONGRESS,’ SAID SUE.”

gress!" said Sue, laughing back over her shoulder.

"I'd rather have some prize-money, personally," observed Mrs. Janvier.

"Oh, no, you wouldn't," Sue protested. "That's just your American aversion to expressing your deepest feelings. You'd rather have your husband presented with a nice useless gold sword than any amount of prize-money."

"I wonder if I would?" she mused between jest and earnest.

"If you wouldn't, don't tell," advised Barbara. "Sue can't stand having her theories upset."

CHAPTER III

“**W**ASN'T it lovely?” cried Sue, with whole-souled enthusiasm, when the last of the guests had gone and Captain Cartwright had retired to his den to smoke a farewell pipe. “Weren't they all dears? How do you manage it, Mrs. Cartwright? The people you get together actually converse.”

“Don't people always ‘converse’ when you are around, Sue?”

“Oh, no; sometimes they are frozen solid.”

“It must be an icy reserve that doesn't melt in the fire of Sue's enthusiasms,” said Barbara.

“Wretch!” laughed Sue. “It would take a volcano to melt *you*. Don't I wish I could see you once in love!”

“You've said that before. How in the world do you think I would act?”

"Oh, like other people — foolishly — normally."

Barbara laughed.

Sue busied herself for a few minutes in passing around a bonbon dish, nowise discouraged by the fact that she was the only one who retained any zest for its contents.

"How Barbara does distress Sir Galahad!" she observed, as she finished the last chocolate.

"Poor Mr. Ferris!" said Mrs. Cartwright. "He admires her so much, but he can't quite make her out."

"He started with the assumption that she was a saint," commented Sue, — "judged by her eyes, you know. But he finds her conversation shockingly unsaintly."

"He is probably a worthy youth," yawned Barbara, "but he is sadly deficient in a sense of humor."

"What did you think of Mr. McMasters?" Mrs. Cartwright asked.

"Oh, he's a jewel," cried Sue, "a diamond of the first water!"

"He's rather good-looking," Barbara remarked.

"Rather good-looking," Sue mocked. "He's the handsomest man you've seen in a twelve-month, and you know it, Barbara Thornhill!"

"No, Captain Cartwright is," said the girl.

"Well, I grant you the Captain. But Mr. McMasters comes next."

"No. Wiggles comes next."

"Bless his angel heart! He ought to come first in *any* catalogue. I can't have him second even to his grandfather. But he's not quite a *man* yet."

"More of a man than some of them are," snapped Barbara.

"You aren't accusing Mr. McMasters of effeminacy, I hope?"

"No," Barbara admitted grudgingly, "I wasn't referring to him. My remarks were general."

"He is not only good-looking," Sue resumed serenely, "he is intelligent."

"Intelligent enough to appreciate *you*," Barbara retorted.

"That takes rather a high degree," laughed Sue. "But here's a problem for Mrs. Cartwright to explain. He's good-looking and intelligent, and distinctly *simpatico*. And he doesn't seem to be a woman-hater. Yet he looks thirty-five. How has he managed to escape matrimony all this time?"

"He hasn't," said Mrs. Cartwright gravely.

"You don't mean to say he has a wife?" Sue exclaimed.

"No."

"She is dead, then?"

"No."

"Not divorced?"

Mrs. Cartwright nodded.

The expression on both girls' faces underwent a sudden change.

"Ugh!" protested Barbara, with evident distaste.

"I wouldn't have believed it," sighed Sue.

"It was a very unfortunate affair," Mrs. Cartwright explained, "but it was altogether Mrs. McMasters's fault. She was a very beautiful woman, but absolutely heartless, and, as

it turned out, conscienceless too. She behaved outrageously. He was not to blame in any way."

"He was to blame for marrying such a woman," said Barbara, severely.

"He was very young," Mrs. Cartwright pleaded.

"Oh, 'very young,'" the girl scoffed. "He was probably twenty-five, wasn't he? A man under thirty can be excused for being any sort of a fool because of his extreme youth. A girl is held strictly to account if she isn't rational by the time she's twenty. It's so hideously unfair!"

"There are several unfair things in the world, but I am not sure that is one of them. I believe a girl of twenty is really as mature as a man of thirty. And John McMasters was several years under twenty-five when he married that woman. It has been ten years since the divorce. He has learned a good many things since then, I suspect. And if he ever chooses a wife again, he will do it more wisely."

"*Again?* He isn't thinking of marrying again, is he?"

Sue's voice had a note of disgust in it.

"Not that I know of. But I don't see any reason why he shouldn't."

"I should think he would have had enough of women."

"Doubtless he thought so, too. Perhaps he thinks so yet. But ten years is a longish time."

"Do you believe in divorced people's marrying?" exclaimed Sue, turning to Barbara.

"I am a Catholic," said the girl, quietly.

"Of course I know your church doesn't allow it, but —"

"That settles it for me."

"Oh, what nonsense!" groaned Sue. "You've got a brain of your own, haven't you?"

But Barbara wisely refused to be lured into controversy.

"What do *you* think about it?" she parried.

"Your brain?"

"No, the divorce question."

"I haven't any religious principles involved, you know. It's just a matter of feeling with me. But the feeling is very, very strong. Of course, looking at it one way, I can see that it seems pretty hard to condemn a man to solitude for his whole life because he made a mistake in character-reading in his boyhood. But — I can't imagine a self-respecting girl marrying him. He would be so hopelessly — second-hand."

The phrase came out explosively.

"Aren't they rather apt to be second-hand anyhow," suggested Barbara, "even when they haven't figured in the divorce courts?"

Sue turned on her fiercely.

"Don't be so disgustingly cynical. There are men whose lives are as clean as any girl's."

"And you are going to wait for one of that kind?"

"Of course I am!"

"You'd better come along to that cloister you predicted for me to-night and take the veil."

"You'd better both of you go upstairs to bed and get your beauty sleep," suggested Mrs. Cartwright, whose traditions were a trifle shocked by the turn the discussion had taken.

"Somebody's left his overcoat," Sue called out as they passed through the hall.

"It must have been Mr. McMasters. The others wore boat cloaks."

"Good thing he didn't come back for it and catch us discussing him! Good night, Mrs. Cartwright."

"Good night."

CHAPTER IV

IT was a brilliant November morning, with a sky so blue that it was almost purple.

There was plenty of snap in the air, but plenty of glow in the sunshine.

The Cartwrights were assembling on their front steps, buttoning their gloves. Even the Captain had given himself that most unwonted thing, a holiday. For this was no mere black figure on the calendar, but the day, elect to redness, of the annual football game between West Point and the Naval Academy.

A little tremor of pure exultation passed over the shapely form of Sue Ballinger.

"Isn't it glorious, just to be alive!" she said.

"I really believe you find it so, you lucky Greek," returned Barbara. "Now when *I* enjoy myself, it's in spite of being alive, not on account of it."

Sue stared incredulous.

"What *do* you mean?" she demanded.

Barbara laughed.

"Oh, *you* can't understand what it's like to be shut up in a puny, inadequate little body like mine. Feel of my hand."

"Why, it's like ice."

"It's always eleven or twelve o'clock before my blood begins to circulate. I'm never really thawed out except in the dog-days."

She fastened the furs closer around her throat.

"Why don't you exercise?" suggested the practical Sue.

"Ugh!" Barbara shuddered. "The mere necessary business of living is exercise enough for *me*."

"Poor Barbara!" cried Sue, laying a hand on her shoulder. "But on such a day as this, how can you help —"

"Oh, I see it's beautiful," said the girl, impatiently; "but I'm too cold to thrill with joy. I suppose you think your own mood is a highly spiritual one,—that your soul is soaring up and flapping its wings together

with rapture. But it isn't at all. Your *joie-de-vivre* is merely the *bien-être* of the healthy young animal. And as a healthy young animal, I am a distinct failure."

"Poor Barbara!" murmured Sue again. "But as a soaring soul, you're a distinct success," she added.

Barbara's retort to this compliment was cut short at a grimace by the arrival of Mr. Ferris, Mr. McMasters, and an ornate lieutenant of marines named Fairchild, who was an ardent admirer of Sue's.

The young men were provided with yards upon yards of blue and gold ribbon, which the girls tied into rosettes and streamers, and distributed among the party, the largest rosette of all being pinned to the tan-colored coat of Wiggles.

"He shall be our mascot," said Mr. McMasters, swinging the boy on to his shoulder, as the watchman opened the tall iron gate in front of the house and signaled to a passing car to stop.

There were several navy people already on

the car, and they found many more at the ferry, and still others at the West Shore station; where a sort of impromptu reception was held till the "navy special" appeared with blue and gold streamers flying from the engine and enthusiasm escaping like steam from every door and window. The train had left Washington early in the morning, carrying the Secretary of the Navy, a number of Congressmen and Senators, and most of the naval officers on duty in the city. A couple of extra cars containing the football team and a large deputation of officers and their families from the Naval Academy had been switched on at Odenton, and another car had filled up at Philadelphia with the League Island people.

The Cartwrights and the rest of the Brooklyn contingent passed through the holiday train, greeting old friends right and left, till they reached the empty car which had just been added for their benefit.

The spirits of the whole party bubbled like champagne. It would have taken a very inert lump of clay not to respond to the glory of

the sunshine and the magnetism of the crowd. Years and rank and dignity were laid aside, and youth—vociferous and confident of victory—held undisputed sway.

A procession of rooters was formed, which passed back and forth through the train. Each man's left hand was on the shoulder of the man in front, while his right hand waved a flag or a ribbon-wrapped cane. The leader wore a preposterously tall silk hat swathed in blue and gold. The occupants of the car through which they were passing joined in the yells and applauded the songs.

With never-failing interest they inquired in unison :—

“Hully Gee !
Who are we ?”

And with undimmed enthusiasm replied :—

“We are the U. S. N. A. V.”

They sang a plaintive little song about—

“Army blue ! Oh, army blue !
We'll make the army blue !
We'll chase their team right off the field
And score a point or two.”

This was followed by verses of affectionate doggerel about the various members of the eleven, punctuated by ear-splitting yells.

“Rah! Rah! Rah!
 Hi! Ho! Ha!
 U. S. N. A.
 Boom! Sis! Bah!
 Navy!”

Finally, as the climax of the demonstration, the Chicago's goat, which had been brought along as a mascot and domiciled till now in the baggage car, was led through the train amid deafening applause, while the following elegant stanzas were sung in his honor:—

“The army mule will soon be dead,
 We'll fill his carcass full of lead,
 We'll hurt that swelling on his head
 And turn his whiskers gray.

Hooray!

“The navy goat is jolly — O
 On account of army folly — O,
 He has butted mules, by golly — O,
 And he'll butt again to-day.

Hooray!”

Wiggles craned his neck to watch the goat out of sight, but he found the racket excessive.

"Tell zoze mans keep 'till," he said, with extreme dignity. "W'iggles can't talk."

The shout that greeted this announcement seemed to him quite unnecessarily offensive.

"W'iggles not like," he asserted severely, clambering down from the seat. "W'iggles get off zis car."

His dignified deliberateness had not prepared them for the sudden dart he made toward the door, but a dozen hands were stretched out to seize him, and he was promptly returned to his grandmother. He showed symptoms of wrath at this stage, though not of tears — Wriggles seldom cried. But the storm was averted and the small boy made happy by an invitation to join the procession on the shoulders of a stalwart friend. From this point of vantage he found the noise exhilarating, and waved his arms and shouted with the rest.

After making sure that it was a vestibule train and that all the outside doors were closed, the anxious grandmother decided that Wriggles was not in a position of extreme peril, and

relaxed her vigilance sufficiently to carry on a fragmentary conversation with her friends. But she was not really at ease till the train slowed down at the West Point station and Wiggles was returned to her intact.

Mrs. Cartwright had never been excessively nervous over her own child, but the shock of her daughter's death, and the feeling that Wiggles was held in trust for a father cruising among the inaccessibilities of the South Atlantic station, combined to give her imagination of possible dangers an abnormal stimulus.

Sue had never been at West Point before. She stood still and looked around her, drawing in her breath with a quick little catch of rapture. The Hudson curved and swept majestically at her feet. The foot-hills of the Catskills rose directly from its banks. Over the mountains lay the golden mantle of late autumn foliage. The scarlet of the maples had passed away, but the yellow leaves of the chestnuts still remained and blended with the brown of the oaks.

"It's beautiful enough to be California!" exclaimed Sue, and the rest of the party laughed with keen enjoyment.

"I don't know the first blessed thing about football," Mrs. Cartwright confessed, as they drew near the scene of the contest.

"Neither do I," cried Barbara. "I don't know a scrimmage from a quarterback."

"They are often rather intimately connected," said Mr. McMasters, who was walking beside her.

Sue, from the heights of knowledge, gave them a compassionate glance over her shoulder, and resumed her eager discussion of technicalities with the group of young men who surrounded her. The coming and going of the color in her cheeks was very pretty to watch.

The naval visitors had been provided with some camp-stools and improvised benches on one side of the field. The army supporters, more numerous of course and equally enthusiastic, were massed on the other side.

The Chicago's goat was being paraded up and down in front of the navy benches.

“Who ever heard of a goat from Chicago?” shouted a West-Pointer between two hollowed hands. “Did you mean it for a hog?”

“We don’t mean *you* to hog the victory!” responded an embryo admiral in similar stentorian tones.

At this point Wiggles created a diversion by insisting on riding the goat, — a feat which was finally accomplished with the assistance of four naval cadets, two to lead the goat and two to hold on to Wiggles. It was all like a big family party, and Wiggles, the youngest person present, gave the finishing touch to that effect. It is very different nowadays, when thirty thousand people assemble in properly constructed grandstands to watch the game.

The two teams trotted on to the field in quick succession, and were greeted with shouts of encouragement from their supporters.

“Now they will all proceed to pile themselves on top of each other,” remarked Barbara, “and presently some one will be carried unconscious from the field, and every once in a while a man will blow a whistle, and *very*

occasionally everybody will stand politely by and let some one kick the ball, and I shan't have the faintest idea what is happening!"

"Shall I explain it to you?" asked Mr. McMasters.

"Oh, dear, no. It would be labor thrown away. Watch the game and enjoy its beauties, and tell me who beats."

"You'll know that by the location of the noise," said Mrs. Cartwright. "That's the way *I* tell, and I always shout when we're ahead."

"It will be fun to hear Barbara shout," laughed Sue.

"Your ears will get weary waiting for that sound," retorted Barbara. "My enthusiasms don't express themselves that way."

"Has she got any?" inquired Mr. McMasters.

"They're of the deep, silent kind," Sue replied.

"Still waters run deep," said Mr. Ferris, with such solemn admiration in his voice that they all felt foolish.

The navy won the toss and chose their goal, so the army had the kick-off. All eyes were turned to the centre of the field.

"That's their great kicker. Watch the ball."

It rose in a noble curve, and sank toward the hands waiting to receive it.

"Oh-h-h, he's fumbled it!" and a sigh of disappointment ran along the navy line.

"Toots has it!"

"Toots can't run!"

"If it was only Sandy!"

"There, he's down!"

"He held it, though!"

"What on earth are those fellows kicking about? It's plain enough, isn't it?"

"Oh, line up! Line up! Play ball!"

"Why do they have to get into such extraordinary attitudes?" This from Mrs. Cartwright. "Mercy! there they all are on top of each other. What *are* they trying to do?"

The whistle blew, and there was a momentary lull.

"What unmitigated savages they are!"

observed Barbara. "Wiggles, my cherub, I want you to promise me that you will never play football!"

Wiggles made no reply. He was gazing at the field, open eyed and mouthed, speechless with amazement. He had been taught that all violence of deportment was ungentelemanly, and the problem of reconciling this hitherto-unquestioned doctrine of the nursery with the anomalies of the scene before him was giving him trouble.

Barbara looked about her with an amused smile.

"You and I are the only sane people left," she said to Mrs. Cartwright, "and I am not *entirely* sure about *you*."

Captain Cartwright was oblivious of everything in the world outside of football. He had cast off thirty years, and was watching each point of the game with the eagerness of a boy. Sue was equally absorbed, and so, of course, were all the young men. Only Mrs. Cartwright and Barbara retained a certain consciousness of themselves as apart from their

surroundings. Yet even they felt their spirits droop when the West-Pointers scored a touchdown, and experienced a thrill of exultation when they failed to kick the goal. The muscles swelled in their throats, and they watched the game with growing absorption, although they made no sound when the rest joined in the shouting.

Suddenly, with a snap, it all stopped. The first half was over. West Point had scored four, Annapolis nothing. The navy was no longer jubilant. It set its teeth and made resolves. Also, I am afraid it talked a little about the heavier weight of the West-Pointers. They enter two years later than at the Naval Academy, and when things go wrong, that two years is said to make a difference in the average weight of the players.

"Oh, we're not beaten yet," said the Captain, in answer to his wife's question, "but it will be an uphill game."

"What for good navy boys 'top killin' bad army boys?" Wiggles asked earnestly. His little brain had been busily at work with the

scanty data furnished him, and had evolved a result of satisfying logic.

"Wiggles!" cried his horrified grandmother. "Where did you get such an idea? Nobody's bad. Nobody's being killed. It's all play."

But Wiggles's laboriously acquired theory was not to be so easily shaken.

"Army boys bewy bad," he asserted. "Haffa be killed. Give W'iggles 'tick. W'iggles go kill zoze bad boys."

It took the concentrated diplomacy of the family to dissuade him from carrying out his heroic resolve.

The army side of the field was noticeably more animated at this time than the navy side. All the navy people were talking, to be sure, but in tones distinctly subdued.

At the blowing of the whistle every sound ceased, and all eyes were once more turned to the field. For the time being this game was the most important thing in the world. It was well played and hard fought. The contestants seemed to be very evenly matched.

The fear expressed here and there among the navy's backers, that the Annapolis team lacked staying power and would go to pieces if they fell behind in the first half, proved quite unfounded. There was no want of grit on either side. The hands of the clock were moving on relentlessly. West Point had been prevented from increasing her lead, but Annapolis had not been able to score. Only a few minutes remained.

All at once a shout went up, "Sandy! Sandy!"

The navy's favorite had the ball, and with marvellous dexterity was dodging through the enemy's line. He passed several linemen by sheer cleverness of feint, threw off a back, and saw the field clear ahead of him. It now became a question of speed, for the West-Pointers were close at his heels. The distance was tremendous,—more than ninety yards,—but Sandy was famous as a runner. The whole navy side shrieked encouragement. A white-haired admiral, fairly dancing with excitement, cried, "Go it, Sandy, go it!"

Captain Cartwright, climbing nimbly on to a three-legged stool, shouted, "Good boy, Sandy, keep it up!"

It was a magnificent run, but the foremost of his pursuers was plainly gaining on him.

All the spectators were on their feet, the excitement of a lifetime crowded into a few seconds.

"Safe!" was the cry of relief, when the panting runner hurled himself over the goal line just as the hand of the enemy was stretched out to touch him.

Then pandemonium broke forth on the navy side. The spectacular character of Sandy's achievement appealed to the imagination of the on-lookers. But the enthusiasm was infinitely greater than it would have been had the same play occurred earlier in the day. They had been saved from the very jaws of defeat, and the revulsion of feeling drove them wild. Women waved handkerchiefs and parasols, men brandished canes and tossed up their hats. The air was rent with full-lunged yells of victory.

Sue, glancing toward Barbara, caught her with flashing eyes and heaving breast, shouting lustily. With a laugh of triumph Sue threw her arms around the slight figure and rapturously hugged it.

"Oh, you delightful, unbent New-Englander!" she cried. "You melted seraph!"

"Hypnotism of the crowd," said Barbara, a little shamefacedly.

The score was now tied, and if they made a goal, the navy would be ahead. On all sides people announced that they would be thoroughly satisfied with a drawn game, but they held their breath while the ball was being kicked as if their life depended on it.

It flew fairly between the posts, and again they shouted joyfully. Five more anxious minutes passed, and the game was over. There had been no further scoring.

Victory snatched from defeat is the sweetest thing on earth. The cadets from Annapolis capered about, insanely jubilant. Officers of presumably mature years were hardly less demonstrative. A triumphal procession formed,

and marched trainward. The rooters led with cheerful demoniac yells. The members of the team were escorted with a frenzy of veneration almost religious. Sandy, the hero of the hour, was borne aloft on men's shoulders, who were proud of the honor of carrying him. The crowd surged and buzzed around. Here and there an enthusiastic youth, unable to restrain his emotions, gave voice to a wild whoop.

On the train the excitement gradually quieted down. There was an occasional effort to revive the demonstrations of the morning, but everybody was tired—as much from excess of emotion as from any physical cause.

More than one weary pleasure-seeker expressed envy of Wiggles, whose convenient size and age permitted him to indulge frankly in the repose from which his elders were cut off. He did, in fact, reënter his own front door fast asleep in his grandfather's arms and was undressed and put to bed without opening his eyes.

"Was Mr. McMasters ever five feet from you during the entire day?" Sue asked through the half-open door into Barbara's room as the two girls were getting ready for bed that night.

"Hardly. But do you know where his eyes were all that time? He never took them off of *you*."

"*What?*" exclaimed Sue, appearing in the doorway, braiding her hair.

"Fact."

Sue looked pleased, puzzled, and a trifle incredulous.

"He hardly said two words to me all day," she objected.

"And he hardly looked two minutes at me."

"He evidently found you more entertaining."

"He evidently found *you* better looking."

"I'd rather he'd think me intelligent than handsome."

"*I* wouldn't," Barbara asserted. "However, I don't see what difference it makes to

either of us. He's still 'second-hand,' isn't he?"

"I hope I can like a man without wishing to marry him," said Sue, with quiet dignity.

"I beg your pardon," Barbara cried penitently. "I didn't mean to be impertinent."

"In any one without your celestial eyes," Sue remarked severely, "it would have been *vulgar*."

CHAPTER V

THE day after the visit of John C. O'Meara, Captain Cartwright scrupulously set about fulfilling his promise to look into the circumstances attending the discharge of the machinist Klein. He found, as he expected, ample corroborating evidence of the man's inefficiency. The statement that the foreman had a brother-in-law registered on the applicants' list proved to be correct; but as no effort had been made to get him taken on out of turn or to put him into the place left vacant by Klein, the circumstance did not seem especially incriminating. A man can't be expected to strangle all his brothers-in-law.

This investigation completed, the Captain proceeded to dismiss John C. O'Meara from his mind as effectually as he had dismissed him from his office. That the politician's

visit might bear fruit in unpleasant consequences to himself (barring the possibility of its repetition) never even remotely occurred to him.

He was, therefore, taken completely by surprise when he received from the Navy Department a rather sharply worded communication asking why he did not carry out the civil service rules for the employment of labor in navy yards.

His emotions were those of anger, not of alarm. He informed the Department briefly that he had used his best endeavors to carry out both the letter and the spirit of the regulations, and asked for specific allegations and the name of the person making them.

There was no immediate reply, but a few days later a young officer on duty at the Department was sent to investigate Captain Cartwright's methods of administration. After collecting testimony from a number of workmen, he called on the Captain at his office and explained his mission.

Now Captain Cartwright did not relish be-

ing investigated, and the fact that the investigator was, from his point of view, a mere boy (fifteen years of service look short beside five and thirty) made the circumstance doubly galling. Furthermore, the questioning of his workmen before he himself was notified that the investigation was in progress, struck him as an entirely unnecessary piece of discourtesy. He kept his temper, but the effort to do so produced a rigid formality quite foreign to his usual manner. And the young man, who had more zeal than discretion, concluded that the Captain had something to conceal.

The first result of the investigation was a letter from the Department asking Captain Cartwright to explain why he had discharged the machinist Klein, who was affirmed by the affidavits of seven fellow-workmen to be thoroughly efficient, and why he had discriminated against the applicant Callahan by refusing to give him employment in spite of the fact that he had recommendations satisfactory to the labor board.

This letter removed the last vestige of

doubt from the Captain's mind that O'Meara was making good his threats of revenge. In some sinuous fashion, quite beyond an honest man's imagination to follow, the wires he was able to manipulate evidently did reach upward to the respectabilities of the general government.

It was his wife's earnest conviction that he ought, at this time, to give an account to the Department of O'Meara's visit and threats; but the Captain's habits of economy with the written word were inveterate. His replies concerning Klein and Callahan were nakedly concise and contained no reference to related matters.

He was not used to being found fault with. His career had been marked by a series of commendations for service faithfully and well performed. The situation wore on him. But he tried, with an attitude finely judicial, to make allowances for the Department.

Not so his wife. There were no half tones in her world. It was divided sharply into black and white, and any one daring to cast

the smallest reflection on her husband could have little doubt of the color assigned him. That the Department had been imposed upon by the unscrupulous tools of O'Meara was no excuse in her eyes. Her indignation raged hotly, and in its forcible utterance her husband may have found a sort of vicarious compensation for his own severe self-repression.

Annoying as the episode had been, Captain Cartwright still did not dream of any really serious consequences, and an earthquake could not have startled him more than the order convening a court of inquiry to investigate his administration.

It was the first touch of the tar-brush of disgrace that had ever come near his immaculate reputation. The consciousness of rectitude is a great thing, no doubt, but it can hardly furnish comfort in every contingency. Those who are used to the rough give-and-take of the business world, or the world of politics, can hardly understand the sensitiveness to the slightest aspersion on his honor of a man who has lived a life protected in

that direction. It is like a doubt cast on a woman's chastity. That it should be publicly investigated is heart-breaking, even where vindication is sure.

Captain Cartwright aged ten years overnight. In the morning he told his wife, breaking it to her gently as he would some frightful calamity.

"It is monstrous, it is outrageous!" she protested. "No matter how zealously a man does his duty and obeys orders all his life, he is liable to be dragged before a court on a trumped-up charge —"

"Gently, gently, my dear. It's bad enough, but don't exaggerate. I shall probably be allowed to walk on my own feet. And — the people at the Department are not omniscient, you know. It's not a trumped-up charge so far as they are concerned. They believe they've got data to go on. They don't know me very well up there —"

"No, you've always kept away from Washington, and you've always snubbed Congressmen and Senators."

"Not snubbed, dear, surely not snubbed, — simply not boot-licked them."

"It's been pretty close on to snubbing, Julius. Do you remember when you sat next to Senator Van Tromp at the Queen's Birthday banquet last spring and he took such a fancy to you and asked you to go on a yachting trip with him, and you told him there was no fun for you in yachting, that you got enough of the sea in a professional way?"

"Well, don't I?"

"And then he asked you to his country place for over Sunday, and you told him it was quite impossible for you to go."

"I was perfectly polite about it."

"You could have gone, had you wished."

"But I didn't wish."

"Exactly."

"He was agreeable enough, but I shouldn't have found him sufficiently interesting to spend two or three days with if he had been John Smith, and there was no reason why I should do so simply because he was Senator Van

Tromp. Besides, he was a millionaire, and there was no way in which I could have returned his hospitality."

"And there was that Congressman we met at the Arnolds'. You didn't know who he was, and got so friendly with him that you arranged to take him trout-fishing, and then, when you found out he was a Congressman, you invented some flimsy excuse and broke the engagement."

"It wasn't only his being a Congressman, you know. He was on the naval committee, and there was a bill before it then in which I might have been supposed to be interested. It would never have done at all."

"Well, just now it would be convenient if they knew you a little bit better at Washington."

"I'm sorry," he said, half humorous and wholly dejected, "that I don't meet with your approval. I thought—"

"Julius!" she exclaimed with fine inconsistency, "I wouldn't have you a particle different for anything in the world!" And she leaned over the back of his chair to kiss him.

"That's good," he answered, with a brave

attempt at a smile. "I regret some things in my life, but really and truly I can't regret that I have always kept away from that hotbed of political self-seekers in Washington."

Nothing had been said thus far to Sue and Barbara about the matters that were disturbing their hosts, although both the girls had noticed that something was amiss. But, as the news concerning the court of inquiry would soon be public property, Mrs. Cartwright forced herself to tell the girls about it.

Of course they were sympathetic and indignant. They tried to belittle it and they tried to cheer Mrs. Cartwright, but without much success. They knew too little of navy life or navy standards to be able to speak with authority.

"Can we be of any use to you while this is going on, Mrs. Cartwright, or should we be just in the way?" asked Barbara, suddenly.

"You certainly wouldn't be in the way, but I'm afraid we shall hardly be able to throw off our troubles enough to make it very pleasant for you."

"Oh, don't you worry about *that*! Dances and dinners are not the breath of our nostrils. And if you're sure we shan't be in the way, we'll stay right here and see you through. Won't we, Sue?"

Sue had been thinking hard.

"No," she said slowly, "I don't see that we'd be of the faintest use to Mrs. Cartwright. I think she would really rather be alone with her husband just now. I believe this is the preordained time for me to make my promised visit to you, Barbara, and afterward we can both come back to see Mrs. Cartwright if she wants us. Now be honest," she cried, taking Mrs. Cartwright's hands and looking into her eyes. "Wouldn't that suit you better?"

Mrs. Cartwright hesitated. The traditions of hospitality were strong with her.

"Be honest!" Sue repeated.

The girl's sincerity was so obvious that Mrs. Cartwright responded to it.

"If you'll both promise to come back afterward. We shall need distraction when it's over."

"Yes, yes," they cried together. "Of course we'll come."

"How clever you are!" said Barbara to Sue next time they were alone. "I didn't know she would rather have us go. I thought it would seem like deserting her. What wonderful intuitions you have!"

"I have a further intuition that a certain young man named Ferris will be very sad when some of us depart."

"Don't your intuitions go far enough to tell you that the young man named Ferris is an unspeakable bore?"

"Captain Cartwright says he's a good officer."

"I don't doubt it."

"And he admires you hugely, Barbara, although your speeches do shock him now and then."

"They'll shock him more before he's through if he doesn't let me alone. When he sits down and gazes at me like a sentimental setter and emits those wonderful sighs of his, I feel as if I were in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean."

"Lost in a trackless waste of emotion?" suggested Sue, sympathetically.

"No, seasick," replied Barbara, concisely.

During the brief remainder of their visit Sue and Barbara would have been glad to consult their other navy friends as to the prospects of this court of inquiry, which the Cartwrights regarded so tragically; but of course they could not speak of it until the news was made public. The last afternoon, on the tennis courts, the girls, who had been absorbed since breakfast in the packing of their trunks, found it had been in the morning paper and was the chief subject of conversation. They were not a little reassured — for the Cartwrights' gloom had been contagious — by the universal indignation expressed and the uniformly perfect confidence shown in the outcome.

Mr. Fairchild, Mr. McMasters, and Mr. Ferris walked home with them, making plans to see them off that evening on the train. As they paused for a few last words at the steps, Captain Cartwright appeared in the doorway and insisted on their all coming in to dinner.

Mrs. Cartwright was appalled, but made no sign. If her husband had shown such inconsiderateness at an ordinary time, he would not have been left in ignorance of her sentiments when next they were alone together. But now any wish of his was sacred, and she would have been too tender of him to complain, if he had brought in thirty unexpected and unnecessary guests instead of merely three. She held a hurried consultation with cook and waitress to adapt the dinner to the circumstances, then returned to the drawing-room, hardly cheerful, but entirely serene.

She was astonished to find that her husband appeared to have put his troubles completely out of his mind. He was in his most genial and delightful mood, telling his best stories and turning his prettiest compliments.

Mrs. Cartwright, almost silent at first, was so much impressed by his heroism that she began to rise to the occasion herself, and the dinner went off with positive merriment.

When the gay leave-taking at the station was over and the train moved out, the two

girls, sitting among the flowers, bonbons, and illustrated papers that had been showered upon them, grew suddenly grave as their eyes met.

"Wasn't it heart-breaking, the way they kept up for our sake!" exclaimed Sue. "I wanted to go off in the corner and cry."

"The spirit of Sparta still lives," said Barbara.

CHAPTER VI

"I AM glad Elizabeth is spared this," said the Captain. "She would feel it very keenly."

"No more than we do," flashed his wife. "She could stand it as well as we."

"Perhaps. But it might be better for us if—" He hesitated.

"If we were dead?" cried Mrs. Cartwright, finishing the sentence for him. "Julius, you're losing your nerve. You see things out of focus. A man can be disgraced only by his own actions. When he has done nothing wrong, no amount of persecution can really injure him."

"It's not persecution," he corrected. "It's misunderstanding. But that only makes it more hopeless."

Sometimes they changed places, and it was

she who was despondent, and he who was sanguine.

"They *must* vindicate me. They can't do anything else," he said on one such occasion.

"Of course," replied his wife, moodily, "but meanwhile you have received an injury that nothing can efface. In the service, perhaps, they will pay some attention to the findings. But every paper in the country will have references to the court, with big silly headlines, and how many people will understand the circumstances or remember how it all turned out? They will simply recall you vaguely as the man who was tried for something—who was in some sort of trouble. It leaves a smirch that nothing will wash off."

"Well, dear, we must make the best of it. After all, what I care for is my reputation in the service. I am not much interested in either the makers or the readers of newspapers."

"I am," said his wife. "They represent the mass of our fellow-countrymen."

"The mass of our fellow-countrymen are

not especially discriminating. I shouldn't care for their praise, Clara, and I don't believe I shall mind their blame."

"You are too good for this world, Julius," she cried, with sudden warmth, "but I love you for it!"

At last the day came for the convening of the court. Mrs. Cartwright watched her husband dress. His frock-coat, which used to fit him so perfectly, showed numerous wrinkles. He had lost twenty pounds in the last fortnight. The hair around his temples, sprinkled with gray before, was now a silvery white. She hooked his shoulder-straps into the catches for him and got out his white gloves. His hands trembled as he buckled on his sword.

"Do they — will they — take it away from you?" she faltered. She had been wondering all along, but had not dared to ask.

"*Hell!* No!" he burst out. "I'm not under arrest. It's not so bad as *that*."

All his wife's pleading had not persuaded

him to employ a lawyer. He proposed to conduct his own case.

"If this were a civil court, where all sorts of tricks and chicanery would be used against me," he said, "of course I should have to have a lawyer to fight them with their own weapons. But before a court composed of my brother officers, there is no such need. They are in search of the truth. The truth is what I want known. They will throw no obstacles in my way, and I have no wish to profit by technicalities."

Captain Cartwright had three pet aversions, — politicians, newspaper reporters, and lawyers. He was utterly unreasonable in his attitude, but of adamant firmness.

The court-martial room on the second floor of the Ordnance building wore an incongruous air of festivity from the decorations left hanging on the walls after the last Friday afternoon dance. But the commodore and the two elderly captains who composed the court were solemn enough to restore the balance. In the back of the room sat half a

dozen reporters, — “like buzzards waiting for carrion,” the Captain said afterward to his wife.

The slow formalities began.

First, the court had to be cleared while the orders constituting it and the accompanying instructions were read. The members of the court found the wording of the precept and instructions rather vague ; but the young marine officer sent on from Washington to act as judge advocate was able to enlighten them on all doubtful points, as the papers had been drawn up in the office of the Judge Advocate General, to which he was attached. He had also had the advantage of talking over the case with the young man who had made the previous investigation, and he was willing to share all the information so acquired with the members of the court.

When these preliminaries had been well threshed over, the doors of the court were opened again, and the defendant, the stenographer, and the reporters returned from banishment. Captain Cartwright waived his right

to counsel; the judge advocate read aloud the precept. Captain Cartwright was asked if he objected to any member of the court and replied that he did not. The members of the court were sworn by the judge advocate, and the judge advocate by the presiding officer. And then at last began the taking of testimony.

The first witnesses called were the seven workmen who had told the Department's investigator that the machinist Klein was a good man discharged without cause and that the applicant Callahan was arbitrarily and illegally refused work when there was a vacancy. They were less emphatic now than they had been when conversing privately with the young officer. In fact, giving them credit for entire sincerity, their opinions as to the efficiency of fellow-workmen, their descriptions of the manner and inferences as to the motives of their chief, were too vague to produce any conviction except that they, personally, did not like Captain Cartwright. Cross-examination developed the fact that most of them had

a reason for this hostility in having been reprimanded by the Captain, and the others admitted somewhat reluctantly an acquaintance more or less intimate with John C. O'Meara.

In reply to questions by the court, these witnesses testified that they had never been asked anything about their politics by Captain Cartwright, nor had they ever heard of his mentioning politics to any one, nor could they of their own knowledge swear what his political affiliations were. They had *heard* he was a Republican.

Klein and Callahan were next put on the stand, but proved nothing beyond their personal grudge against Captain Cartwright. The impression they made for frankness and manliness was not especially favorable.

Then came testimony to show that, of sixty-five men discharged during Captain Cartwright's incumbency, forty-one had been Democrats and only twenty-four Republicans, and that of a hundred and seven new men taken on, fifty-nine had been Republicans and only forty-eight Democrats.

The Captain listened to this part of the testimony with surprise and disgust. He was learning these political statistics for the first time. He had cared no more for the views of his workmen on politics than for their views on the theory of atomic weights. What was the object of the judge advocate in bringing out these facts? Was it conceivable that a Democratic administration, committed to the policy of civil service reform, could sink so low as to find fault with him because the balance of numbers happened to have fallen in favor of Republican workmen? Even if they wished in their hearts that he had manipulated otherwise (and, really, he had thought better of the men in high places), surely they could not openly censure him for having so obviously done his duty!

On the completion of this testimony, which had dragged along through two days and part of the third, the judge advocate announced that the government had no more witnesses to call.

Captain Cartwright then began his defence.

He had endeavored to secure the presence of Mr. O'Meara, but Mr. O'Meara had declined to obey the summons, and naval courts have no power to compel the attendance of civilian witnesses. The Captain's having insisted on leaving the door open into the adjoining room during O'Meara's call—which had been a matter of instinct with him rather than of precaution—proved most fortunate, for the clerks in the next room were able to give a very clear account of the whole conversation.

This testimony was not admitted without an objection by the judge advocate.

"It's not pertinent to the case," he said.

"It is extremely pertinent," said the Captain, "for it shows the source of the charges made against me and the malice underlying them."

"Do you mean to accuse the Navy Department of malice?"

"Certainly not. The Department, like myself, has been victimized by the machinations of this man, O'Meara."

"Are you prepared to prove that assertion?"

"I haven't all the connecting links of evidence. I am not a detective and have employed none. But the inference is clear from the facts I am presenting."

"Inference is not evidence," observed the judge advocate pompously, and no one felt called upon to dispute his oracular statement.

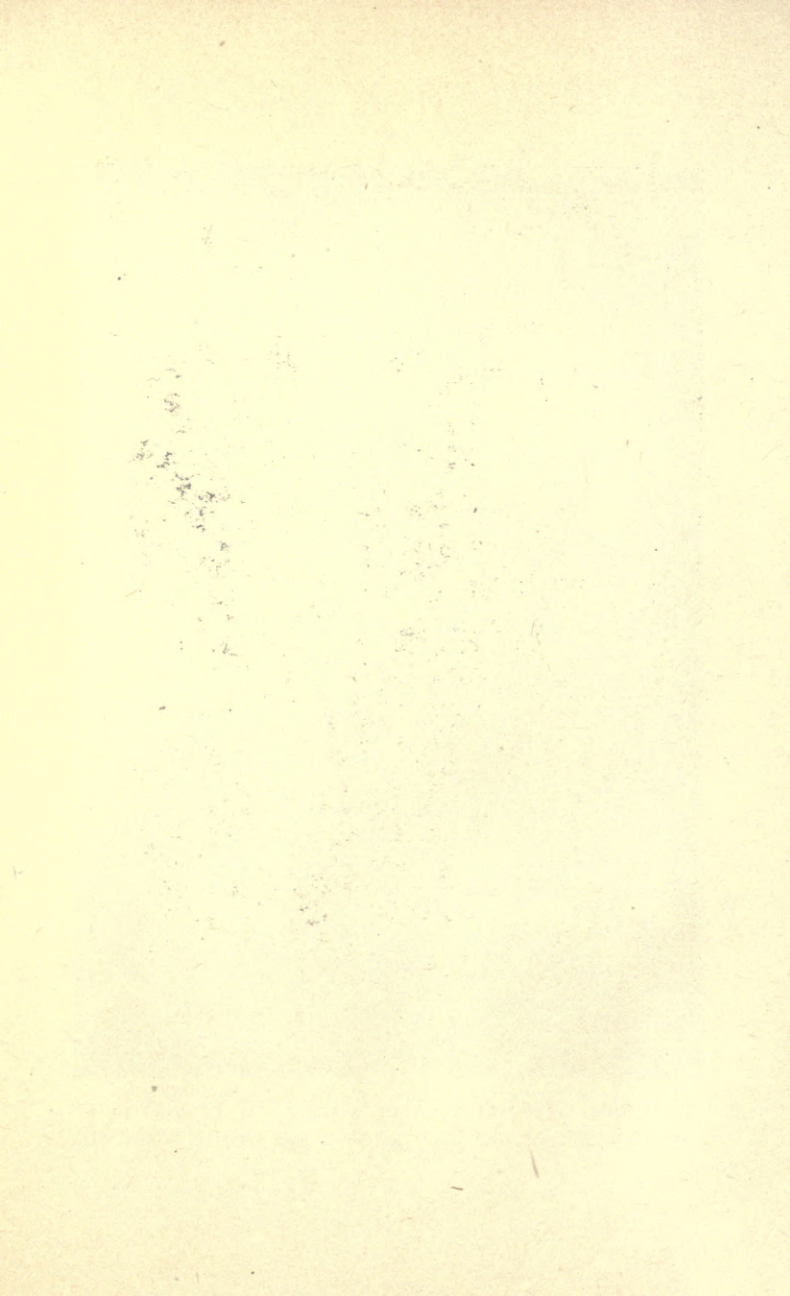
The court was cleared to deliberate on the question raised and decided to admit the evidence.

Captain Cartwright then took the stand in his own behalf and gave an account of his efforts to administer his department justly and impartially, describing the precautions taken to ascertain the individual fitness of the men for their work, his method of advancing the most competent, and the considerations which guided him in discharging the unworthy. Coming down to particulars, he detailed the circumstances attending the dismissal of Klein and the non-employment of Callahan.

At the conclusion of his narrative the judge advocate took up a long list of questions for



“THE JUDGE-ADVOCATE TOOK UP A LONG LIST OF QUESTIONS.”



the cross-examination, asking first in a perfunctory way:—

“You are a Republican, I believe, Captain?”

“No, I am not a Republican,” he replied quietly.

The effect of this statement was electrical. The members of the court straightened up, the judge advocate became animated, the reporters on the back seats craned their necks forward eagerly.

“Are you a Democrat?”

“Yes.”

“How long have you been one?”

“All my life. My father was one before me — a war Democrat, of course, not a Copperhead.”

“You have always voted the Democratic ticket?”

“Always, when I was where I could vote at all.”

“This is very important, Captain. Why didn’t you mention it before?”

“I didn’t think it had anything to do with the case.”

“In my judgment it has everything.”

For a moment the Captain looked at the judge advocate dazedly. Then all at once, a light broke on him. With suddenly illumined vision, he saw in the vague wording of the precept the meaning its phrases had held from the beginning for the judge advocate and the court. He saw farther, for he remembered O'Meara's charge that he was a Republican, repeated by several of the government's witnesses, which he had not thought it worth while to contradict. He saw this charge, in the light of which his alleged persecution of Democrats wore quite a different aspect, passed along in garbled *ex parte* form, through Congressman Smith and Senator Flint, and whatever other intermédiaries there may have been, till it reached the Navy Department. He had supposed that the charge against him was one of poor judgment or of arbitrariness, — a dickering sort of charge, equally difficult to prove or disprove, and requiring cumulative outside evidence that would be merely opinion after

all. Now it had crystallized into a concrete accusation demolished by a single word from himself. The utterly unnecessary character of the whole proceeding sickened him.

"I have never until this moment understood the full meaning of the precept," he said. "It had not occurred to me that any one could suspect me of anything so absurd as a political bias in dealing with my men. Since I have the honor, quite accidentally, of belonging to the same party as the present administration, and since the two men I am accused of discriminating against and the majority of the men I have discharged belong to the same party, the whole fabric of the accusation falls to pieces on the spot. When the judge advocate has finished his questions —"

"I *have* finished them. The rest are no longer relevant. I will turn the witness over to the court."

The president glanced at the other members, who shook their heads.

"We have no questions to ask," he said.

"Then, with the permission of the court, I will rest my case here."

"You have hardly begun on your list of witnesses," suggested the judge advocate.

"The rest are workmen from my department. I never liked the idea of bringing them here to testify in my favor. It didn't seem to me either dignified or proper. But I supposed it was necessary. Now that I see it is not, I am extremely glad to omit that part of the testimony."

"That is a question for you to decide, Captain," said the judge advocate, and turning impressively to the court, he announced:—

"The government has no evidence to offer in rebuttal, and I have no remarks to make. The case is in the hands of the court."

CHAPTER VII

MRS. CARTWRIGHT was aghast when her husband told her of the summary way in which he had cut short the proceedings of the court by omitting the greater part of his defence. But he waived her objections aside.

“I am sick to the core of it all,” he said. “What a position for a man of my age and rank to be put in, to have to call the men from his own machine shops to speak a good word for him! I couldn’t have stood it, Clara.”

The findings of a court of inquiry are not made public till they have been acted upon by the reviewing authority, but the president of the court took occasion to say, “I wouldn’t lie awake nights any, if I were you, Cartwright,” and the Captain hurried home, to share the good news with his wife. She

heaved a long sigh of relief, then insisted, with lightning readjustment of her outlook, that she had always known it would be so, that it could not possibly have been otherwise, that she had never given the result of the investigation a moment's thought, but that the outrage of his having been subjected to it remained the same.

After the relief of the commodore's hint, the action of the Department was disappointing; for while the findings were not disapproved, the assent of the reviewing authority was by no means so hearty as the "full and honorable acquittal" of the court had seemed to call for.

Nor was this the end. In less than a week Captain Cartwright was in receipt of an official document detaching him from duty as equipment officer at the Brooklyn navy yard and placing him on waiting orders.

"This is more of the work of that wretch O'Meara!" cried Mrs. Cartwright.

"Very likely. But what can we do about it?"

"Go tell him what you think of him, at

least," she suggested. She would have greatly enjoyed being able to do so herself.

"With all due deference to you, madam, I think I will do just nothing at all. It's much more dignified and at least equally effective."

"See Senator Flint and Congressman Smith and find out if they really are acting as O'Meara's cat's-paws."

"Do you think they would tell me?"

"Perhaps if you started at the other end, you could find out from the Navy Department who had been working against you."

He shook his head wearily.

"No, no. We'll go into retirement and wait till the clouds roll by. If the powers that be should blunder into a war with England—"

"There won't be any war with England," asserted his wife, "and if there should be, they'd refuse to give you a ship."

The Captain bit his lip.

"God forbid!" he exclaimed fervently.

Throughout the whole trying experience the outspoken sympathy of naval friends had been a great comfort to Mrs. Cartwright, proving

once more, if it needed proof, the high esteem in which her husband was held by those who knew him best. From the sympathy of outsiders she derived less satisfaction; for when it was not indiscriminating partisanship, she fancied she could detect in it a note of uncertainty, as though they did not understand the circumstances well enough to be perfectly sure the Captain was all right. They hoped he was. They very nearly believed he was. But how could there be so much smoke without some fire?

Perhaps what pleased Mrs. Cartwright most of all were the warm words from clerks, watchmen, mechanics, laborers, and all manner of employees in her husband's department. Since they no longer had anything to gain from his favor it seemed obvious that the affection they professed for him and the indignation they expressed at the way he had been treated came straight from the heart.

The good will of the men did not limit itself to words, but ran over in hearty offers of assistance about the packing. All were

promptly declined by Captain Cartwright, who had views of his own concerning the employment of government workmen for personal ends. The long establishment of the custom of borrowing a carpenter and a sail-maker to help in the moving did not lend it any sanction in his eyes.

"But I'm not busy this morning, Captain," one of the men urged. "I really haven't anything to do at all."

"If that's the state of the case, I'd better be laying you off," said the Captain. "There's no use keeping men on the pay-roll who have nothing to do."

That sort of thing hurts a man's feelings for the moment when he is trying to be helpful, but on the whole they adored him for it.

"Mrs. Cartwright," said an old carpenter, confidentially, "me and some of the men will be around after hours. I guess the Captain can't say nothing against *that*. We'll take the measures for some of them crates and boxes you need, and we'll fix them up for you in no time."

"But they mustn't be made during hours," Mrs. Cartwright stipulated dutifully.

"Oh, no, ma'am."

"And they mustn't be made out of government lumber."

"No, ma'am, of course not."

Mrs. Cartwright thought it better not to mention these plans till they passed into accomplished fact. As she feared, her husband was more annoyed than touched by the attention and was only half convinced by the explanations given as to when and out of what the boxes and crates had been made.

Meantime Mrs. Cartwright ran hither and thither, planned and packed, mounted step-ladders to take down her well-loved pictures that she had gathered together in all parts of the world, wrapped tissue paper around the Captain's cherished books and fitted them with her own hands into the boxes the men had made for her. When and where would she open them again? Eternal maddening question of navy life! It seemed such a short time since she had unpacked them all and put them

in place. They had supposed they were settled for three years. But—it seemed otherwise to the gods, which is to say, the Navy Department.

Everybody's allowance of belongings was cut down to the scale of trunks, except Wiggles's, who was to carry with him crib, bath-tub, high-chair, and a whole cart-load of toys. Wiggles was a privileged character. It was a relief when the hideous upheaval time was over, boxes, crates, and barrels all stored away, and Captain and Mrs. Cartwright, Wiggles, and his nurse, established in the three rooms at a quiet hotel on Gramercy Park, which were all their reduced income could compass.

Gramercy Park has been invaded by boarding-houses, but still carries an air of extreme respectability. It is a curious little overlooked spot of perfect quietness just around the corner from the swirl of the busiest thoroughfares. The high railing and locked gates of the little park help to keep up the illusion of exclusiveness. Accessibility had been its chief virtue in Mrs. Cartwright's eyes when she selected it for

an abiding-place. She had no notion of sitting down to brood over her troubles or of letting her husband do so. She knew that action was good for her, and she felt that it must be equally beneficial for him. So she dragged him around, amiably unwilling, to art exhibits, Brooklyn Institute lectures, and even to afternoon teas.

For the most part he resigned himself with the utmost philosophy to his wife's enthusiasms. But occasionally he rebelled and insisted on spending whole afternoons in the less strenuous society of Wriggles. If the weather was pleasant, they made excursions to Central Park. If it was stormy, they sat in front of the fire and sang. They always began with rollicking old salt-sea shanties, dating back to the many-storied line-of-battle ships, and invariably ended with the mournful Calvinistic hymns of the Captain's Sunday-school days. The Captain's fidelity to tune was sporadic, and Wriggles had betrayed no symptom of a musical ear. But these were mere details. Both grandfather and grandson derived the highest

satisfaction from their duets, and if the people in the next room objected, they were not unfeeling enough to say so.

Sometimes the Captain got out of going to things, especially teas, by the simple device of taking a nap. It was beyond Mrs. Cartwright's comprehension how any one in good health could deliberately lie down in broad daylight to take a nap. Six hours' sleep out of the twenty-four were enough for her, and she could not see how her husband managed to enjoy eight. It struck her as suggestive of earthiness — the only thing about her husband that did so strike her, he being, for the most part, in her eyes, altogether sublimated.

By tacit agreement the Cartwrights did not discuss the injustice of which they both felt the Captain was the victim. His wife's compassion for him was so intense that she could feel the bodily pain of it. Her indignation was as fiery as ever. But both indignation and pity she kept to herself, and they lived out the fiction together that they were having an enjoyable holiday. Few men used to leading an

active life enjoy a prolonged holiday under the most auspicious circumstances ; but when it is an enforced one with a sting, not of disgrace, to be sure, but of official displeasure attached, it becomes a very serious trial.

The change from shore duty to waiting orders produced, of course, a notable shrinkage of the Captain's income. In comparison with the slur of being laid on the shelf, both he and his wife regarded the purely material annoyance of doing without things as a minor matter. They had not been rich before, and they were not suffering for essentials now ; but the sudden lopping off of pleasant superfluities and the necessity of counting pennies where before they had only counted dimes was, with all allowance for high-minded philosophy, harassing.

One day the mail brought a letter from a man in New Hampshire who owned a farm next to a small patch of woodland that belonged to Captain Cartwright. He said he wished to increase his farm in that direction and offered the Captain twenty-five dollars an acre for his land.

"How fortunate that is!" cried Mrs. Cartwright, who was patiently wearing her last year's bonnet without a word of complaint. "There couldn't be a time when a little extra money would come in handier."

The Captain did not know about the bonnet. His wife always looked beautiful to his eyes, whatever she had on. He knew the lining of his overcoat was worn, and that he had resigned from his club because he could not afford to pay the dues, but those were his own affairs.

"It *would* be convenient, but I can't sell that bit of land, Clara. It came to me from my mother, you know. It's been in the family for more than two hundred years."

Mrs. Cartwright's face fell.

"I think I should waive the sentiment if the land were mine. You have never seen it, have you?"

"Not that I remember. I may have seen it as a boy."

"You never expect to visit it or build on it or anything of that sort, do you?"

"No, but I shouldn't like to sell it, Clara."

"Oh, if you feel that way about it, of course, dear," she said, with the faintest of sighs, "we are no worse off than before you got the letter."

So the Captain sat down and wrote to the man that for reasons of sentiment — he stated what they were — he did not wish to sell his land. The man replied, giving various personal details and explaining how important it was for him to enlarge his farm and how the Captain's was the only land available, asking him to take the matter into further consideration, and ending by offering him thirty dollars an acre.

After reading this letter, Captain Cartwright handed it without comment to his wife.

She read it and prudently said nothing, but looked at him with interrogation in her eyes.

He was obviously pondering. Finally the result came out.

"I suppose it's that man's whole life, and it's only a bit of sentiment by the wayside with me. It seems rather hoggish to stand in his way like that. I believe I'll let him have it."

"I think you're right," agreed his wife, trying not to look too much pleased.

"But, of course, I can't take the thirty dollars an acre. He would think I had professed all that sentiment about the ancestral land and the inheritance from my mother just to get a bigger price."

"He won't appreciate the delicacy of your feelings in declining it, dear. He'll simply regard you as an escaped lunatic."

"Perhaps. But I should prefer that to the other horn of the dilemma. I shall tell him he can have it at twenty-five dollars an acre."

"Why not say for nothing, as it's all pure benevolence?"

"I don't wish to pauperize the man."

"Thank Heaven for that!" muttered his wife. Then she softened and went over and kissed him, taking his face between her hands. There must have been moisture in her eyes to make them shine so. "You are the dearest old goose in the world," she said.

When the money came, Captain Cartwright could not bear to use it for current expenses.

He felt that he wished to see this small ancestral inheritance embodied in some concrete imperishable form, and he wished also to lay it at the feet of his wife. It was not often that he was able to make her a present which he felt to be worthy of her. So he took his converted acres around to Tiffany's and turned them into a ring, an opal set with diamonds, which he brought home in high spirits and presented, with the prettiest of speeches, to his wife.

Heroically she stifled the thought of the last year's bonnet's growing archaism and thanked her husband so enthusiastically that he never suspected her disappointment.

"Imagine that ring inside of a glove mended at the finger-tips!" she laughed to herself when she was alone.

Then she lifted the ring to her lips and kissed it passionately.

"There are things in this world that are better than common-sense," she said, and meant it.

CHAPTER VIII

“**A** BOX for each of us — strictly impartial — marked ‘flowers’ and ‘perishable’ and sent from New York.”

All this from Barbara to Sue.

Sue gave a happy laugh, as she pushed aside the portières and looked in from the next room. Her eyes danced, the warm color deepened in her face. She was like a little child fairly aquiver with excitement. Barbara smiled at her indulgently.

Sue seized upon her box and plunged eagerly through string and wrapping-paper.

“Violets!” she cried. “Oceans of them! Oh, the beautiful things!”

She buried her face in the fragrant mass.

“At five dollars a bunch,” commented Barbara.

“Don’t be sordid. They are exquisite. But I can’t find a sign of a card! Hurry

up and look in yours, you old slow-poke. Perhaps the card got lost out of mine."

Barbara, whose chief interest hitherto had been in watching Sue, now obediently opened the other box.

"Lilies-of-the-valley," she announced. "Very sweet and innocent But no card. He wishes to remain anonymous."

"Oh, how absurd!"

Sue lifted up each flower separately, looked over the boxes and lids, inside and out, and at every portion of the wrappings. But there was no clew.

"It's some one who knows us both," said Sue, with thought-creased brow; "probably somebody at the navy yard."

"Yes, I think so, too."

"I believe you *know*, Barbara!"

"Indeed, I don't. I can't even guess. But this much is clear. Violets are for love. It's somebody who loves *you* and doesn't want to hurt *my* feelings."

"Who's having intuitions, now?" laughed Sue, not wholly displeased, for she was wholly

human. "Perhaps it's somebody who loves *you* and is afraid to say so," she suggested. "He wants me to speak in his behalf, while he expresses his awe of your ethereal character by means of immaculate lilies."

"There never was a naval officer capable of such complexities. At least, we didn't meet him."

"Well, he's a dear, anyhow." And Sue took another long whiff of her violets.

"Perhaps you wouldn't be so expansive if you knew his name."

"Probably not. That's the beauty of anonymity."

"Perhaps that's what he counted on."

"He's welcome to his triumph, then, seeing that he is necessarily unconscious of it."

"Rather a subtle sort of triumph for a blunt seafaring man."

"Perhaps his astral body is with us now," and Sue blew a kiss into the air from her finger-tips.

"Naval officers don't have astral bodies," said Barbara with conviction.

It was not long after this that the girls started down to New York to make their promised visit to the Cartwrights. They intended to stay only a week and would have omitted it altogether, as their prospective hosts were living at a hotel, but Mrs. Cartwright laid such stress on their keeping to the original engagement that they feared to hurt her feelings. She had notified all the girls' friends at the navy yard of their coming, and the week was crowded so full of festivities that it had to be stretched into two before Sue finally started on her way to California and Barbara returned to her New England home.

"Did you ever notice how friendships ripen during absence?" mused Sue, coming home from the Monday afternoon dance aboard the Vermont a couple of days after their arrival. "Now you'd think that we'd have drifted away from all those people during the months we've been gone and that we'd have to begin all over again, but, instead of that, we parted mere acquaintances and we meet as old friends."

"Who? You and Mr. Fairchild?"

Sue blushed adorably, but more from animation than embarrassment.

"No, you stupid. *Everybody.*"

"You're so expansive, Sue. No wonder you make friends. You go through life with all your pores open."

"And you go through it with your shell shut up tight, like a barnacle at low water."

"I know it."

"How was Mr. Ferris?"

"As inept as ever. But I think I've settled *him.*"

"Why, what do you mean?"

"I told him my ideas on marriage."

"And what might *they* be?"

"That it ought to be a mere business contract, that sentiment spoiled it, that I wouldn't marry a man unless he was very wealthy, that I would prefer to marry an old man who would soon die and leave me his money, and that all sensible girls felt as I did, though they were not all honest enough to say so."

Sue laughed.

"How you must have shocked him!"

"I certainly tried hard enough."

"You've shattered his idol."

"I hope so."

"You little wretch!"

"Heigh-ho! One must do *something*. I'm not making a collection of scalps."

Mr. Ferris was, in fact, seriously distressed. Barbara's cynicisms had often wounded him, but none so deeply as this; and by dint of gazing into the limpid depths of her eyes and dwelling on the cameo clearness of her profile, he had been able till now to forget them more or less. But this—*this* was unforgettable, unforgivable. He nursed his disillusionment in silence overnight; but next day, when the Duluth came in from a cruise, he could not forbear telling Mr. McMasters about it. His confidant gave him no sympathy.

"Your literalness will be the death of you yet, Ferris," he said gravely. "She didn't mean that. She was joking."

"No, I assure you, she was entirely serious."

"Nonsense! She's not that sort of a girl, — not the least in the world."

"I didn't use to think so, either."

"You don't want to think so now. No girl who held such views would express them."

"She oughtn't to express them *anyhow*. That isn't the way for a girl to talk. I can't bear to hear a girl say such things."

"Oh, if you're discussing the good taste of saying what she did, you must form your own opinion. But you'll be doing Miss Thornhill a great injustice if you suppose those are her real sentiments."

Mr. Ferris shook his head and refused to be comforted. He called at the Cartwrights' no more; he kept away from the dances and other places where he was likely to meet them; he moped by himself, and thought up bitter phrases about the whole feminine sex.

Meanwhile Barbara was congratulating herself on the success with which she had gotten rid of her admirer.

"What have you done to Ferris?" Mr. McMasters asked her.

"What do I appear to have done to him?"

"The poor fellow is in the depths. You must have said something that hurt him very much."

"You're assuming a good deal, it seems to me."

"I didn't mean to be presumptuous."

He spoke with the easy assurance of a man ten years her senior.

She smiled at him.

"Not that. But, for Heaven's sake, let things stay as they are!"

"You know he cares a great deal for you?"
Mr. McMasters persisted.

"Oh, I hope not!" she cried, and the shudder that passed over her was of unmistakable aversion.

"I see," he said quietly. "I won't meddle. I wasn't sure how it was, you know. . . . Poor devil," he added, "I suppose this is no worse than any other way. But I'm sorry for him."

"Oh, so am I. My religion teaches me to be sorry for everybody."

"You are a Catholic, I believe?"

"Yes."

"And is Miss Ballinger a Catholic, too?"

"Dear me, no. She's nothing."

"She doesn't strike one as a negative sort of person."

"Well, a heathen, then."

"Is that all?"

"Oh, a heathen with a thirst for righteousness."

"That's *something*," he murmured.

"I believe they used to call her at college an S. A. T."

"Which means?"

"Seeker after Truth."

"Wasn't it Lessing who said that the pursuit of truth is better than the finding of it?"

"Great nonsense, whoever said it."

"From the standpoint of Catholicism?"

"From the standpoint of truth."

Mr. McMasters felt it was time to shift his ground.

"It was at college that Miss Ballinger and

Miss Cartwright — Mrs. Whittemore — became friends, wasn't it?"

"Yes, they were in the same class."

"Were you in it, too?"

"No, I didn't go to college."

"Why not?"

Barbara shrugged her shoulders.

"I suppose my parents thought me more deficient in piety than in learning. Anyhow, they sent me to a convent."

"Did you like it?"

"It was a good deal of a bore, but college would probably have been just as bad — or anything else."

"You have found nothing worth while?"

"Nothing," she said, smiling, and without emphasis.

"How did you come to know Miss Cartwright? She never went to a convent, did she?"

"Oh, no. Ours was a vacation friendship. I caught Elizabeth in her lighter moments."

Wiggles emerged from a corner of the room, where he had been piling up blocks so quietly that they had forgotten his presence.

"Did — oo — know — my — lubbly — mudder?" he asked, pausing after each word, and gazing wistfully at Mr. McMasters.

"Yes, Wiggles, I knew her," he said gently.

"Did — oo — know — my — lubbly — mudder?" he went on, turning to Barbara.

"Yes, dear," she said very low.

"Why do ebbrybody know her becept me?" he asked next, and his great wondering eyes were like a mourning angel's.

"Poor little man!" cried Barbara, supremely touched, catching him up and kissing him. "I wish we could bring her back to you."

Wiggles twisted himself out of her arms.

"Oh, I don' know," he said, with entire cheerfulness. "Mollie says I gets ebbrysing I wants, 'cause I'se 'a poor li'le mudderless boy.'" (The quoted phrase was rendered with great pathos.) "Mollie says mudders spansk zay boys and makes zem mind. . . . P'waps I wouldn' like zat bewy much," he concluded contemplatively.

"Wiggles," cried Barbara, with grave voice

and dancing eyes, "you have destroyed my last illusion."

"No more than you have done to poor Ferris," murmured Mr. McMasters. But Barbara deigned no reply.

CHAPTER IX

THE Duluth was to give an afternoon dance. The Cartwrights and their guests were invited by Mr. McMasters and were also asked to stay aboard for dinner.

Captain Cartwright begged off under the rather flimsy pretext that somebody had to stay at home to look after Wiggles. They did not urge him, for they understood that an afternoon on a ship might have more of pain than pleasure for him. Mrs. Cartwright went on account of the girls, from a strict sense of duty. Barbara went on account of her hostess, from an equally strict sense of duty. So Sue was really the only one who bade fair to get any enjoyment out of the occasion. Her spirits were high enough, however, to make up for all deficiencies, and

she ended by communicating to the others a certain reflection of her own enthusiasm.

The Duluth was lying out in North River and was to send her boats to the wharf at the foot of West Twenty-third Street, where the guests had been asked to assemble at three o'clock.

The steam-launch had just filled up with people as Mrs. Cartwright and the girls arrived.

"I'm afraid we'll have to take one of the other boats," said Mrs. Cartwright, a little disconsolately. She had visions of flying spray ruining her only good gown, and had a feeling, moreover, that the launch, being bigger, was less likely to be run down by a ferry-boat.

"Oh, I'm so glad!" cried Sue, entranced. "The row-boats are so much prettier. Just think, Mrs. Cartwright, I was never in a man-o'-war's boat before!"

Mrs. Cartwright smiled without enthusiasm.

"You don't care to wait for the launch to come back, then?"

“Why, that would be half an hour!”

Sue's tone was so full of dismay at the possibility of such a waste of golden moments that Mrs. Cartwright and Barbara laughed outright.

The naval cadet in charge of the cutter came up and introduced himself. He assured them that nothing in the world was safer than rowing in New York harbor, and said he had several mackintoshes in the boat, which they could put on to protect themselves from the spray. So they climbed into the stern, enveloping themselves in the big clumsy rubber coats, above which the girls' laughing faces and bright spring hats looked comically incongruous.

“Up oars!” cried the cadet, and at the word ten white ash blades rose together and were held rigidly erect.

“Shove off!”

The apprentice boy standing in the bow pushed away from the wharf with his boat-hook.

“Let fall!”

Five oars to the right and five to the left described quadrants in the air, and touched the water at the same instant.

“Give way, starboard. Easy, port.”

Then, as the boat was headed around, —

“Give way together!”

The oars rose and dipped in perfect unison, and the boat, gathering headway, began to cut through the water with a fine effect of strength, — the primitive strength of muscle, beside which steam appears a vulgar parvenu.

“How beautiful it is!” cried Sue.

Mrs. Cartwright assented, thinking she was speaking of the river. She had been used to men-o'-war's boats for so long that they had become to her a mere means of conveyance. She had forgotten the picturesqueness of the sailors' uniforms, — the rolling collars open at the throat and the floating black silk kerchiefs knotted below. She noticed the men, how well set-up they were, what clean-cut faces they had, and felt a pleasant thrill of pride in the trimness of the boat

and its occupants,—the pride of a good housekeeper looking at a spotless floor. She was thoroughly loyal to the service, but she had lost sight of its æsthetic properties.

Mr. McMasters met them at the foot of the side ladder and took them to his state-room to lay off superfluous wraps and readjust their hats and hairpins.

The girls glanced around the room with interest. It seemed wonderful to them that a man could live for three years in such narrow quarters. Every inch of space was utilized. There were drawers under the bunk, lockers and bookshelves over it. The bureau was also a desk. There were racks overhead where odd-shaped tin boxes were stowed.

“That one’s for a cocked hat, that one for epaulets,” Mrs. Cartwright explained. “That long flat one doubtless holds his ‘special full dress’ and ‘social intercourse’ uniforms. They’re safe from mildew and moths that way, you know.”

The bunk was given a couchlike effect

by being covered with a Bagdad portière and heaped up with a variety of fancy pillows. On the top of the bureau was a daintily embroidered cover. The pincushion, shaving-paper case, laundry list, and a dozen trifles showed feminine handiwork.

"He must have lots of girl friends," said Sue.

"'Unto him that hath shall be given,'" quoted Barbara. "I think we'd better make him another pillow."

"We'll do it!" cried Sue, with her infectious little laugh of delighted expectancy.

Just then Mr. McMasters came back for them and led them up on deck again. They had been aboard the Duluth when she was lying at the navy yard, but she was quite transformed for this occasion. An awning had been spread over the deck and the under side of it made gay with looped flags. Bunting was everywhere. Masts were swathed in it, gun-carriages were draped in it, hatches were covered with it. The flagship's band, borrowed for the afternoon, was playing an alluring waltz. The enlisted men,

not allowed to come abaft the mainmast, gathered there, watching the spectacle before them with mild interest. At least there were no drills for the afternoon. In the space cleared for dancing, a few couples were circling around; while groups of guests, just arrived, stood chatting with the officers who had invited them.

Mr. McMasters busied himself for a few minutes bringing up one officer after another to introduce to Mrs. Cartwright and the girls. Then he asked Barbara to dance.

There was just the faintest look of surprise in Sue's eyes. From her kindergarten days, she was used to being chosen first. But she did not grudge Barbara her triumph, and turned with perfect sweetness to dance with a beardless young doctor, "just caught," as Mr. McMasters had expressed it in introducing him, from the medical school. Naval life was entirely new to him; and although he tried manfully to conceal it, he was tremendously proud of his uniform and bristling with the importance of his position.

Presently a tug came alongside, bringing the guests from the navy yard. Mr. Fairchild was among them, and quickly made his way to Sue, carrying her off with a high hand from the protesting young doctor. And then, somehow, it happened that nearly everybody stopped dancing and stood watching them. It was the poetry of motion incarnate. There may have been other people there who danced as well as they, there may have been other girls more beautiful than Sue, other men handsomer than Harry Fairchild; but there was no other couple who so happily combined all these qualities.

"Those two were made for each other!" sighed a fat, elderly lady from the navy yard, standing by Mrs. Cartwright.

"They certainly dance well together," replied Mrs. Cartwright, a shade impatiently. "But life is not made up entirely of dances."

"Don't you wish you were in his shoes?" asked Barbara, glancing up a trifle maliciously at Mr. McMasters. He was gazing intently, like almost every one else, at Fairchild and Sue.

"If they would make me dance as well as he does," he laughed good-naturedly.

"Baffled again!" thought Barbara to herself. She was not sure whether a door had been shut in her face or whether she was merely gazing at a blank wall.

All at once Sue became conscious that they were the only dancers left, and that a hundred or so eyes were fixed on them.

"Everybody's stopped," she said. "What a pity!" And she gave a slight preliminary drag with foot and hand to bring him to a standstill.

But young Fairchild was intoxicated with the joy of dancing. He was a Southerner and loved it for itself, and it was not often that he had such a partner as Sue.

"Don't stop! Don't stop!" he pleaded pantingly, holding her a trifle closer and whirling her across the deck. "What does it matter about the others? This is heaven. Don't break the spell. You're not tired?"

"No, but —"

"Never mind, then. This is *our* day, you

understand. There's nobody here but us,—just you and me.”

She caught the spirit of his enthusiasm, smiled acquiescence at him, and they danced on, till the music suddenly stopped. The spell snapped with the music. Sue's momentary exaltation vanished, giving place to a wave of embarrassment. But there are various sorts of embarrassment, and Sue's contained no mixture of *gaucherie*. It was merely a pretty confusion emphasized by a lovely flush of color.

“Oh, but that was fine!” sighed Fairchild, in retrospective rapture, as he sat down beside Sue on a flag-draped hatch and fanned himself with his cap. “Will you dance every dance with me?”

Sue laughed at him.

“I mean it,” he said. “Why not?”

“Manners,” objected Sue.

“What are manners compared to the joy of floating through ether like that?”

“Appearances too,” said Sue. “They'd have us engaged, if we danced together all the afternoon.”

"Let's *be* engaged then," he suggested, on a sudden impulse.

Sue laughed merrily.

"Too big a price to pay."

"Don't laugh it off. I'm really serious."

"So am I. Never more so." But she was still laughing.

Just then one of the officers Mr. McMasters had introduced came up and asked her for a dance. She rose, Fairchild fancied, with alacrity.

"I thought this was mine," he ventured.

"Not this one," she said, casting back a charming smile at him as she moved away.

The young man looked ruefully into his cap.

"Now did I propose to her, and did she refuse me?" he asked himself. "Or was it all a joke?"

CHAPTER X

"SUE," Barbara called to her, as she was passing by with her partner, "do you mind if I tell about the arbutus?"

Sue stopped and joined the little group.

"Mind? No, indeed," she laughed good-naturedly. "It's the most foolish little story," she explained to the others, "but, for some reason, Barbara thinks it's funny."

Barbara's eyes were twinkling with mischief.

"It was while I had Sue up home with me," she began demurely, "that I found out the chief ambition of her life was to see trailing arbutus."

"Well, I'd read and heard so much about it," Sue interpolated apologetically.

"It was early in the season," Barbara went on, paying no attention to the interruption, "but I was determined to gratify her if I

could. We hunted over the hillsides where the snow had melted off. I knew all the good places. And at last I found a patch. 'Here it is, Sue!' I shouted. 'Where? Where?' cried Sue, gazing around in the treetops. 'Here,' said I. I was down on my knees, scratching away the brown leaf-mould with both hands to show her the plant in all its glory."

"Glory!" sniffed Sue, contemptuously.

"There were the thick green leaves. I turned them back and showed her the blessed little pink-and-white stars cuddled away underneath. 'You don't mean,' she gasped, 'that that's trailing arbutus — that poets write about and all Easterners rave over? — that poor, miserable, stunted, insignificant little weed?' — Tell them what you had expected, Sue," she broke off suddenly.

"Why, of course I had expected something magnificent," Sue explained, — "something at least as big as a peony and very stunning. . . . What *is* there so funny about it?"

Every one was laughing heartily.

"Now, isn't that deliciously in character?"

Barbara commented, with the proprietary pride of an exhibitor of trained canaries. "Could anything be more utterly Californian?"

"The quantitative standard!" Mr. Janvier explained teasingly. "They're young, though. Give 'em time. They haven't got through marvelling yet at their own astonishing statistics."

"During early infancy, it's always the bulk of her offspring that the proud mother boasts about," observed Barbara. "Distinction of character is necessarily a later development."

"It's the superlative form that counts out there," Mr. Janvier continued. "I remember seeing a railroad extensively advertised as the *crookedest* railroad in the world."

"But it's true," cried Sue, missing the point in her eagerness to controvert a supposed charge of exaggeration. "It *is* the crookedest railroad in the world."

For a moment she looked nettled by the renewed merriment that greeted her statement. Then her face cleared charmingly.

"Jeer away!" she cried, as her partner drew



“‘YOU SEE WE HAVE NOT DRAPED OUR SEATS WITH NATIONAL
FLAGS TO-DAY.’”

her into the dance again. "You know you're all jealous of California!"

"You see we haven't draped our seats with national flags to-day," said Mr. McMasters to Mrs. Cartwright, after he had found a comfortable armchair for her, and she had settled herself among the red and white bunting that was spread over it.

Mrs. Cartwright laughed.

"I don't suppose you'll ever forget that, will you? It was a joke on Elizabeth and me," she explained, turning to Barbara, "which these men found wonderfully amusing."

Mr. McMasters laughed reminiscently.

"I never shall forget Miss Elizabeth's face when it dawned on her that she had to pull all her elaborate decorations to pieces."

"Elizabeth was to have a little lawn-party," Mrs. Cartwright continued to Barbara, "and she asked somebody for the navy-yard flags. It was when we were at Portsmouth. Her father would never have loaned them to her, but the other man thought it was all right."

"So it was," interpolated McMasters.

"Of course. And we worked all the afternoon decorating with those flags, — Elizabeth and I and some of the girls."

"You may remember how scornfully you declined our help."

"Why, yes, we wanted to do it all ourselves."

"And you did."

"Well, it was pretty, wasn't it?"

"Indeed it was!"

"Oh, we worked so hard! We didn't just hang a flag over everything in sight and call it done, as these men do," and she waved her hand around at the decorations. "We had a color scheme and a drapery scheme."

"I should say you did!"

"Well, what was the matter?" prompted Barbara.

"A mere trifle of naval etiquette we unwittingly offended against."

"Mere trifle!" cried Mr. McMasters. "If you had plunged us into war with all the world at once, would you have called it a mere trifle? Why, Miss Thornhill, they had

used the flags of all the nations to drape over the benches that people were to sit on, and had spread out one of them—I won't say which—for a rug in the refreshment tent!"

"Was that so very dreadful?" queried Barbara, innocently.

"Dreadful? It was unheard-of, atrocious, unthinkable. The flags of other nations must be treated with the same reverence as our own. They must never touch the ground. They must not be used for mere wrapping or decoration. To lean against them, to sit on them, and—worst of all—to step on them, is a deadly insult."

"But we are sitting on flags at this moment," Barbara protested.

"Signal flags," said the young man.

"Well, my dear, we had toiled all that afternoon, and we had just finished and had barely time to go in and get dressed and eat a hurried dinner before the arrival of the guests, when along came some of these young men, asking if they might see our handiwork. And we were so proud of it that we let them."

"And a good thing you did!"

"One chorus of excited shouts went up from them. 'Why, you can't do this! You've got to take it all down!' They made such a ridiculous fuss that we didn't believe them at all. We thought they were just envious because they hadn't had a hand in it. Elizabeth ran into the house to get her father. . . . I wish you could have seen him."

Mrs. Cartwright paused impressively. Mr. McMasters chuckled.

"*He* wasn't excited, was he?" asked Barbara, incredulously.

"He didn't jump up and down and tear his hair, if that's what you mean. He came out smoking that brierwood pipe of his. He puffed at it for several minutes in absolute silence, while he looked around. We thought he was admiring it all. Then he took out his watch and glanced at it. 'I'll give you fifteen minutes to take everything down,' he said. . . . That was all."

The way in which Mrs. Cartwright talked

of Elizabeth was a source of constant surprise to Barbara. There was no suggestion of death. Elizabeth might have been in the next room. Barbara herself found it almost impossible to speak of her friend. Something caught in her throat when she tried to pronounce Elizabeth's name. But Mrs. Cartwright talked of her quite naturally, without hush of voice or solemnity of manner. It was evident that she did not propose to let her daughter drop out of her life merely because she had passed out of sight and hearing. Festal occasions seemed more apt to bring up her name than serious ones. It was as if the mother wished the absent child, in some mysterious spiritual fashion, to share the family pleasures,—as if, perhaps, without this inclusion, to take part in them herself would be a disloyalty.

“It is beautiful,” thought Barbara, “but I don’t see how she does it.”

* * * * * * *

The dinner in the wardroom was as much of a novelty to the girls as the dance on deck had been. The long table was banked with

flowers. Table linen, glass, and crockery were decorated with the anchor of the navy, and a few pieces borrowed from the cabin bore the eagle of the nation as well. There were several other feminine guests and one man in civilian's clothes, who looked positively odd among the uniformed officers. The strangest sight to Barbara, the noiseless white-gowned, black-capped, long-queued Chinese servants who waited on them, looked familiar enough to Sue, except that in California they twist their queues around their heads and wait on their employers bareheaded, while these men, shipped in China, would never have dreamed of such a breach of etiquette.

The talk at the table was of many things and many places. It jumped lightly from Haiti to Samoa, and from an audience with Li Hung Chang to an interview with a rebel general in a seething South American republic. The anecdotes had a combined flavor of salt and saltpeter that tickled the palates of the guests with a sense of the unaccustomed and the picturesque.

"What a life!" sighed Sue. "Is there anything you haven't seen and done?"

"A great many things," said Mr. McMasters. "Your life would be as novel and full of interest to us as ours could be to you,—your life at a woman's college, or on your brother's ranch in Southern California, or studying nursing at a hospital, or keeping house for your other brother in a Nevada mining camp."

"How in the world did you know all those things about me?" she asked curiously. "It's almost a biography."

"From Mrs. Cartwright and Miss Thornhill."

"I didn't know they were such gossips."

"You're not annoyed, are you?" He was very grave, almost apologetic.

"Oh, no, indeed!" she laughed. "But you must have been very hard up for something to talk about."

CHAPTER XI

THE Cartwrights spent the summer at a mountain resort, selected for the two considerations of healthfulness for Wiggles and inexpensiveness for themselves.

The Captain made a certain pretence of trout-fishing, but after one or two unproductive rambles with rod and reel and flies, he announced that the sport was not what it used to be and that he was getting too old for it. Mrs. Cartwright understood quite well that her husband's trouble was not old age, nor even the depression due to idleness and official neglect, but the want of Elizabeth, who had been for years his companion on his fishing trips. She kept her diagnosis to herself, however, and merely proposed accompanying the Captain on his next excursion. He had not intended making another, but acquiesced from politeness.

Mrs. Cartwright donned a short skirt and a pair of heavy boots and supplied herself with a rod and reel and a can of grasshoppers. She scorned flies. Her success in catching trout put her husband on his mettle, and although he would not abandon his flies, he also made a very fair showing. When it was lunch time, they built a fire, cleaned their fish, and cooked them on hot stones. Then, drawing forth sandwiches and a small bottle of claret from the Captain's capacious pockets, they sat down to the most delightful repast they had enjoyed for years.

The stream in which they had been fishing gurgled and rippled along among the boulders at their feet. A slight breeze stirred the leaves over their heads, which shut out the hot noonday sun and veiled the glowing sky. The temperature was delicious,—warm enough to relax, not hot enough to enervate. Bright-eyed chipmunks whisked around their feet, fearlessly eating the crumbs that were thrown them. Now and then they heard the flutter of a bird's wings. Myriads of worthy,

hard-working little ants swarmed through the grass and up the tree trunks.

When luncheon was over, the Captain pressed the tobacco into the bowl of his pipe and looked around serenely.

"After all, it's still good to be alive, madam, if we *are* growing old," he said.

"It is admirably good to be alive," she agreed, "and we are not growing old unless we insist on having it so."

He patted his temples and shook his head. His hair was almost white, although his moustache still retained a portion of its dark coloring. The effect of the combination was striking, and was heightened by the light gray suits and gray crush hats that he habitually wore.

Mrs. Cartwright was extremely proud of her husband's good looks and thoroughly enjoyed the admiration he excited among the matrons and spinsters of the hotel piazza.

"You ought to be consumed with jealousy, Mrs. Cartwright," one of them said to her coyly, "for we are all madly in love with your husband."

"Oh, I'm quite used to that!" laughed Mrs. Cartwright. "You're not the first, and you won't be the last. But nothing could please me more."

"He has the most wonderful eyes," exclaimed an unmarried lady of angular outline, looking up from a bit of embroidery in a frame. "They seem to give out sparks, and they look into one's very soul. It's like a flash of lightning when one meets them."

"It's his voice that chiefly appeals to me," said a buxom widow, crocheting in the largest and most comfortable rocker. "It's so sympathetic. It gives a deeply personal significance to the most trivial remark."

"And then he's so dignified," chirped a tiny mite of a hunchback. "The habit of command clothes him like a mantle."

Mrs. Cartwright, in high glee, could not refrain from repeating these things to her husband, who was so much bored that he went in and out of the hotel by the back door for a week and confined his social attentions thereafter to the men in the smoking room.

The ladies on the porch, talking over his defection, decided that Mrs. Cartwright was really jealous and that the poor man was avoiding them to preserve the peace.

When the summer was over, the Cartwrights returned to Gramercy Park and resumed the wearisome occupation of waiting. The Captain kept himself factitiously busy by writing a paper for the Naval Institute on eighteenth-century sea-fights between the French and English. It required a good deal of reading and gave him an object in spending his mornings at the library.

He had long since stopped making applications for duty. An officer in the Bureau of Detail wrote him a confidential letter, advising him to wait for a change in the administration, since, although he did not understand its exact source or nature, there was evidently some powerful influence at work against the Captain, preventing for the present his assignment to duty.

Before the presidential election in the fall Mrs. Cartwright wasted much good energy in

trying to persuade her husband that he ought to vote the Republican ticket. However unimpressible to her arguments he had seemed before, she returned each time to the attack with renewed confidence, unable, apparently, to understand how entirely it was a matter of sentiment with him and how little logic had power to sway him.

"Are you so quixotic as not to hope there will be a change in the administration?" she asked.

"For personal reasons I hope there will be a change, — yes, certainly."

"Why not vote, then, for the side you hope will win?"

"One has no right to vote for a President of the United States for personal reasons. I am a Democrat by birth, bringing up, and present conviction, and I shall, as usual, vote the Democratic ticket."

"Do you really think the country would suffer from the election of a Republican?"

"No."

"You are too absurd, dear. You know

your allegiance to the party isn't the result of deep thought. It's just an inherited loyalty,—like your feeling for the Congregational Church. The party principles have changed fifty times since your father became a Democrat. You know you don't believe in free silver, and you regard the present candidate of your party as a demagogue."

"My dear madam, he *is* a demagogue, and free silver is rank insanity, and if I had no personal interest at stake I might be a bolter this time. But under the circumstances —"

"At least you can stay away from the polls."

"No, I shall vote the Democratic ticket as usual," he replied. And he did.

The evening of election day, as Captain and Mrs. Cartwright stood among the throng in Herald Square watching for the returns, he did not rebuke her enthusiasm over every Republican plurality that was posted, but he himself said nothing till the election was decided. Then he murmured a fervent, if inconsistent, "Thank God!"

His wife laughed happily and pressed his arm.

"You see my vote didn't decide it, after all," he bantered.

"So you think you've saved your cake and credit too?" she jeered. But she was too happy to insist.

On the 5th of March Captain Cartwright sent in an application for the command of the Idaho, and received his orders to her by return mail.

CHAPTER XII

THE Idaho was a new battle ship shortly to be put into commission at the Norfolk navy yard. Captain Cartwright was delighted with her. He personally superintended the finishing touches of her equipment, suggesting improvements here and there, watching over each detail lovingly. He had not paraded his depression during those weary months of waiting, and the joy of a man in the fifties does not bubble over expansively, but it pervaded every fiber of his being. His wife, who was a close observer, heard it in every tone of his voice and saw it in every act and gesture.

“It was all very fine, rising superior to undeserved misfortune and resting serene in the consciousness of virtue, but it’s rather nice to be appreciated again, isn’t it?” she said.

"I might get along without the appreciation," he commented smilingly, "but not without the ship. After all, it's my life."

Wiggles had his own sources of pride at this happy period, for he was fitted out with a strictly regulation sailor suit. The world was almost too small to hold him when he first saw himself in long trousers, laced at the back and nautically flaring at the ankles, a blue shirt with white-braided collar and wristbands, and such fascinating accessories as a lanyard and boatswain's whistle. The ship-ribbon on his cap bore the name of the U. S. S. Idaho. He had been carefully kept from the knowledge that his clustering curls might in some quarters be regarded as effeminate. He seriously regarded himself as one of the sailors of his grandfather's ship and fraternized with the rest of them whenever opportunity offered.

"He would be ruined if this lasted long," observed his grandmother, "but it's only for a few weeks. We shan't be following

after you from port to port, as I used to do when Elizabeth was little."

"I wish you would," her husband said, smiling with affectionate reminiscence. "It was very delightful to find my wife and child in every port. But I think you've earned the right to take life a little more easily now."

"Yes, my ship-following days are over. It was a hard life. But we had a good time, didn't we?"

"Indeed we did," he agreed heartily, then added, with a twinkle in his eye, "And you don't know the bow of a ship from the stern yet, do you?"

"Not I," she replied.

"Wonderful!" he mused, with real pride. "How could you keep it up?"

Years ago, thirty and more, when the captains of men-of-war and the admirals in command of squadrons were allowed to have their families live on board ship with them, there flourished a masterful set of navy women of the Old Campaigner breed. They knew the name of every part of the ship, knew the de-

tails of the work going on aboard, called every officer in the service by his nickname, gave advice, interfered in matters of detail and discipline, and even occasionally, it is said, issued orders to the officer of the deck and called for "my gig" or "my barge." Rank was the one thing they revered, and they observed it among themselves and exacted its observance from others with rigid formality.

As a protest against this unlovely type, a coterie of younger women arose who went to the other extreme and affected an ignorance about ships and everything pertaining to them that seemed at times too complete to be possible. If they were obliged to refer to the parts of a ship at all, they made a point of speaking of the front and back, the right side and the left. They spoke of going upstairs and downstairs, of floors and ceilings, called the masts the front one, the back one, and the one in the middle, and described the yards as "those sticks going across." As to rank, they were so utterly unconscious of its existence that they spoke of their husbands as

"mister" even when they were commodores and admirals. Yet, human nature not being altogether consistent, a look of real annoyance was sometimes discernible on the faces of these good ladies when some poor ignorant outsider of a civilian would innocently copy their manner of speech and call the admiral or the commodore "mister."

With the present generation the pendulum is swinging back to the center, and the attitude of the younger women toward their husbands' profession is much more simple and natural.

Mrs. Cartwright, however, had started out with the ultra-conservative feminists, and she and her husband were loyal to the traditions of their youth.

When everything was at last complete on the Idaho, and officers and men were installed aboard, they made a few preliminary trips to test their engines, and then, somewhat to their disgust, received orders to take part in the patrol of the Florida coast, to prevent filibustering expeditions from getting over to Cuba. It was understood that the assignment was only

temporary, for the Department was loath to employ anything so expensive as a battle ship on duty that could be better done by a light-draft gunboat. But the Springfield had broken her craft-shank and must go into dry-dock, and there was no other gunboat available to take her place. Yet her place must be filled, convenient or not, for any reduction of the patrolling fleet would be sure to be misunderstood by Spain, who was at best inclined to be sceptical of the good faith of our government in repressing the ebullient sympathies of its citizens.

"Rather unpleasant duty for such a pro-Cuban as you, Captain," said a civilian acquaintance at the club.

"He's not so much pro-Cuban as anti-Spanish," broke in another man, who knew him better.

"My personal sympathies have nothing to do with the case," said the Captain, rather sternly. "My duty is perfectly clear. I have simply to obey orders."

"I suppose you'll look the other way when

you think it needful, though," said the first speaker, with an attempt at slyness.

"Sir," thundered the Captain, "you are insulting!"

"Oh, come," protested the young man, deprecatingly doubtful whether the Captain was joking or in earnest.

"Do you accuse the government of bad faith in its dealings with a friendly power? Do you accuse the Navy Department of trickery? Do you accuse *me* of going down there to play a part in a farce comedy? My orders are to use the utmost diligence to prevent the escape of any filibustering expeditions from the district under my surveillance,—and, by God, I'll use it!"

"I meant no offence," the other explained, somewhat bewildered. "I thought it was an understood thing that the patrol was for politeness, not for business."

"It's not so understood by *me*," returned the Captain, gruffly.

"Would you really sink a vessel full of good Americans just to please the Dons?" asked the man who had been listening.

“Not to please *anybody*, but to obey my orders and to keep the faith of the nation,—yes, if it were necessary.”

He tossed aside his magazine as he spoke and left the room.

“By George, I believe he’d do it!” said the second man.

“He’ll get himself into trouble if he tries it,” muttered the first.

CHAPTER XIII

THE coast of Florida was divided for the purposes of the patrol into three districts, of which the southernmost, extending around the bend and a little way up both sides, fell to the lot of the Idaho.

It was weary work, the Captain wrote his wife, with all the discomforts of war and none of the glory. They had to encounter the same difficulties in getting coal, provisions, and mails as a ship on blockade. They had to face the same monotony, the same necessity for ceaseless vigilance, for watching night and day, night after night, day after day, week in and week out, with never the reward of a blockade-runner to chase.

To be sure there were occasional conferences with secret service men and information given of intended expeditions. But though the

Idaho was always on hand at the appointed time and place, the filibusters never materialized. Either the suspicions of the secret service men were unfounded, or the filibusters had a sufficiently well organized information bureau of their own to be always warned of the Idaho's approach. Time and time again the little comedy was played with no tangible results except the expenditure of large quantities of government coal. At least, however, no filibustering expeditions escaped them. If they caught none, it was because there were none to catch.

As the long hot summer wore to an end, the ordeal began to tell on the health and spirits of all on board. They suffered from lack of fresh provisions, lack of exercise, and lack of variety, and from an excess of watching, waiting, and sweltering. Livers and kidneys grew torpid. Nerves became irritable. Letters were tinged with homesickness. But through it all no one saw any variation in the Captain's patient, vigilant, cheerful self-control. Early and late, morning, noon and night, yesterday, to-

day, and to-morrow, he was always the same, — kindly, considerate, courteous toward the well-intentioned, uncompromisingly severe toward shirks and pretenders. They loved him in wardroom and steerage and forecastle, — all but those few to whom he had shown the hard side of his nature.

At last, after so many cries of wolf, the animal really came.

The secret service men gave notice that a schooner named Bell Buoy would run into a bay on the east coast — a swampy, desolate place, twenty miles from a post office and fifty from a telegraph line — on or about a certain date, to take aboard a party of filibusters and a cargo of arms and ammunition.

Now this was a situation requiring delicate handling. Captain Cartwright revolved the circumstances very carefully in his mind. If he intercepted the Bell Buoy before she reached her destination, she would have nothing incriminating aboard, and he could not hold her. He could not lie off the coast and watch till she came out, for obviously if he could see the

Bell Buoy the Bell Buoy could see the Idaho and would not put to sea. On the other hand he had no means of knowing in what direction or at what time the schooner would sail, and if he kept out of sight he might miss her altogether. He could afford, however, to give her a considerable start and still be sure of catching her, for although she was known to be a fast sailer, she could hardly be a match for a seventeen-knot battle ship.

These being the conditions of the problem, the Captain soon worked out a solution. He so timed his arrival off the entrance of the bay that if the Bell Buoy carried out the plans stated by the Treasury men, she would be inside taking on her cargo. He kept far enough offshore to be out of sight, for he felt sure that if the filibusters were there, they would maintain a lookout.

Just at sunset the navigator, with an ensign and a dozen men, climbed down the ladder into the steam-launch and set out for shore. They carried no lights and calculated to make the coast several miles south of the harbor. Their

finding the ship again was to be a matter of accurate steering, as it was impossible for the Idaho to make any signals serviceable to the launch which would not also betray her presence to the filibusters.

An eighteen-mile trip on the open sea in a little steam-launch is not the most delightful thing in the world, but that was merely an incident. They made the coast and steamed north along it, carefully inspecting its configuration by the starlight and the waning moon. They crossed the entrance to the bay while the moon was under a cloud. A little to the north they landed the ensign and a quartermaster, with instructions to find out whether the Bell Buoy was inside or not, and to report at the same spot as soon as it was dark the following evening. The two scouts were given twenty-four hours' rations of a sort that required no cooking, and the launch proceeded up the coast. A spit of land, densely wooded, running well out into the sea a couple of miles north, proved to be just what they were in search of, as it commanded a good view of the

harbor entrance and at the same time gave them a chance to hide the steam-launch and themselves before daybreak.

It must be remembered that it was not the first time, but the fifth or sixth, that they had done this sort of thing in the past three months, and that they had no reason to suppose the last report any more authentic than the others.

The next night, on calling for the scouts, they learned, to their great surprise, that they had at last treed their game. A schooner in every way answering the description of the Bell Buoy was lying concealed up a creek, and there were evidences of great and abnormal activity around her.

Once more they returned to the point where they had spent the previous day, landed a petty officer, a couple of men, and some supplies, and then started with all speed for the ship. They spent several hours searching for her, but at last made her out and got aboard soon after sunrise, to the great relief of the Captain, who was anxiously awaiting their report.

During the day the launch was stocked with

a week's provisions, and at dusk set out once more for shore, heading toward the spit where the others had been left behind to keep watch. Here they hid the launch behind the mangrove bushes, made a camp, and settled down to keeping a day-and-night watch for the coming out of the Bell Buoy.

The officer put in charge of the expedition was Mr. Ferris, who had recently been detached from the Brooklyn navy yard and ordered to the Idaho. The Captain's reasons for selecting him were set forth very lucidly in his daily letter to his wife,—a letter fast assuming the proportions of a journal, it had been so long since there had been a chance to send mail. It is not always wise for a man to explain his reasons to his wife, but Captain Cartwright knew by long experience that the discretion of his could be trusted.

"Ferris is not brilliant," he wrote, "but he has the faithfulness and the pugnacity of a bulldog. He will never relax his watch on that harbor entrance, and when the Bell Buoy comes out, nothing in heaven or hell

—certainly no condition of wind or water—will keep him from coming to tell me of it.”

It turned out even so. Four days later, on a bleak, windy morning, with a choppy sea running, a puff of smoke was detected rising out of the hollow of the waves.

“The officer of the deck reports the steam-launch returning to the ship, sir,” said the orderly, with a properly wooden salute.

Captain Cartwright picked up his cap and sauntered out on deck, concealing the anxiety he felt for the frail craft laboring in the trough of the sea.

“Run down as close as you can to her,” he said to the officer of the deck, “and tell the chief engineer to spread his fires. We are probably in for a chase.”

The disproportionate cloud of fierce black smoke from the steam-launch betrayed the violent efforts made to force her speed, yet her progress was very slow. Through the glasses levelled on her it was presently seen

that all hands were busy bailing. She was tossing about like a cork. It seemed a miracle that she was not swamped.

As soon as they could make out the tones of his powerful voice shouting through a megaphone, Mr. Ferris delivered himself of his information.

"She got out of the harbor at 6.15 this morning and headed to the southward. Better not stop to pick us up. You might miss her. We're all right."

But the Captain did stop to pick them up,—no easy feat with the sea that was running, as there was great danger of the launch being crushed against the side of the rolling battle ship. It was safely accomplished, however, and the drenched, exhausted, shivering men who were hoisted on board were served four fingers of rum apiece by the doctor's orders.

"Ferris," said a young officer, who had been securing the launch in her cradle, "what in the name of common sense possessed you to tell the skipper to leave you

behind? You hadn't half enough coal to get you back to shore."

"I know," said Ferris, apologetically, "but we could have rigged a sea-anchor to keep her head to the wind, and sooner or later something would have come along and picked us up."

In the course of time this story reached the Captain's ears.

"Heroism and idiocy are singularly alike at times," he said; but his manner to young Ferris was notably kindly thereafter.

CHAPTER XIV

AS soon as the launch and its occupants were taken on board, the Idaho was headed to intercept the Bell Buoy. Lookouts were stationed at the mastheads. Down below fires were being cleaned of ashes, fed with coal, and roused to fury by the fierce wind storm of forced draught.

The Idaho had been running at ever increasing speed for a couple of hours when a sailing vessel was reported hull down half a point on the port bow. All hands gathered on deck to watch the chase. After the monotony of three months' waiting, it offered them a welcome bit of excitement. And so deep is the spirit of the hunt implanted in the breast of man that even the most ardent Cuban sympathizers grew exult-

ant as the hull of the flying vessel came in sight and gradually increased in size.

The Bell Buoy (for it soon proved to be she) was making an excellent showing, running wing and wing before the wind with every stitch of canvas crowded on. But the odds were too uneven. Slowly, but surely, creeping up as relentlessly as fate, the big battle ship was gaining on her.

Although there were a score of glasses levelled at the schooner, it was the Captain who first exclaimed, —

“They’re throwing it all overboard!”

The deck of the Bell Buoy was swarming with men staggering under the weight of apparently very heavy boxes, — several men to a box, — which were being whipped up from below and thrown into the sea.

“Arms and ammunition all going by the board,” observed the Captain. “They are getting rid of incriminating evidence. But there are several of us here to swear to the fact. They ought to have begun earlier.”

He watched the schooner in silence a few

minutes, then gave the order, "Signal them to heave to."

The flags were strung up at the masthead, but no attention was paid to them.

"There's a fog coming up, I think, Captain," suggested the navigator.

The Captain nodded.

"If we don't get them pretty soon, we'll lose them altogether, and that fellow knows it as well as we do. Fire a blank cartridge."

There was a puff of smoke, a flash of fire, a noisy peal, and then — nothing. The Bell Buoy still sped on her way. The fog was rolling down on them, thick and white. A few minutes more and the schooner would be out of sight.

"Drop a shell ahead of her," said the Captain, suddenly.

Again the puff and flash and roar, and this time a projectile ripped the air and splashed into the water a hundred yards beyond the schooner.

"That will bring our friend to reason, I

think," remarked the Captain. But the Bell Buoy showed no sign of heaving to.

"That fellow has nerve," muttered the Captain.

He glanced again at the thickening fog.

"You can fire to hit this time," he said presently.

The shot struck home. So much was certain. But the Bell Buoy was enveloped in such a cloud of smoke that it was impossible to tell at first how much damage had been done.

As the smoke cleared away the schooner's taffrail was seen to be under water and her bow well up in the air. Her crew were cutting away the sails and crowding forward and up into the rigging. She was evidently sinking rapidly.

"Stand by to lower your starboard boats," said the Captain to the first lieutenant. "Starboard!" he directed the man at the wheel.

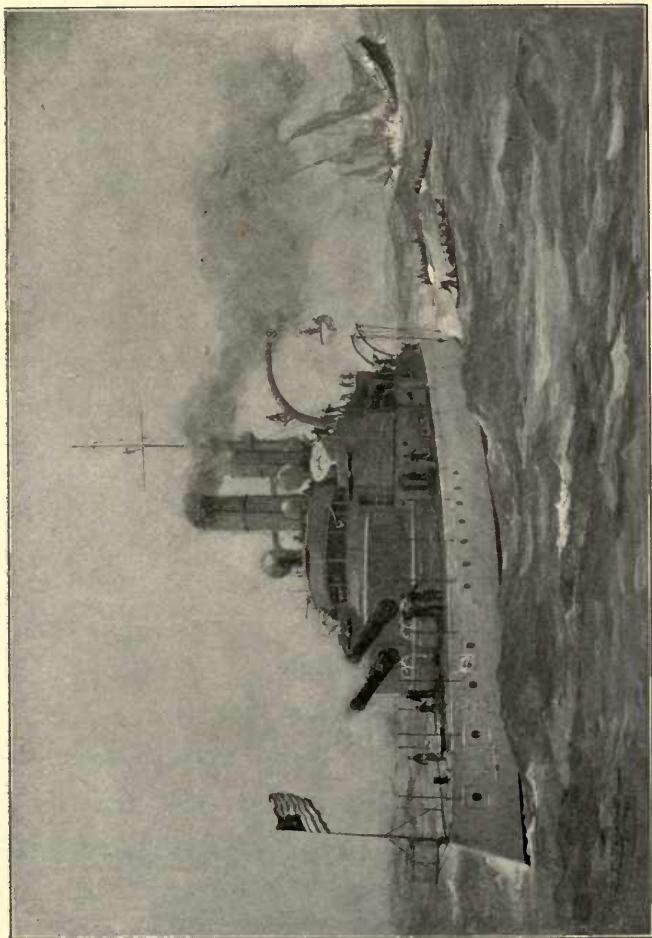
"Starboard, sir," the quartermaster echoed. Then in a moment, "Hard a starboard, sir."

The Captain rang one bell for the engine to slow down, and presently two to stop. The

Idaho swung around till she headed to the east, and the starboard boats were lowered in the lee of the ship and put off for the sinking schooner. As soon as they had gotten away, the Idaho was started ahead again, her helm ported, and she came up to leeward of the Bell Buoy, so that the returning boats, heavily laden with men, should not have to struggle back against the wind.

It was a very motley collection of Cuban patriots and American adventurers, nearly a hundred strong, who were finally rounded up on the deck of the Idaho. For the moment they had been frightened into something resembling meekness and were actually grateful for being rescued,—in some instances almost abjectly so. But as soon as dry clothes had been served out to them from the ship's stores and a good hot meal from the galley, they began to bluster and talk about recovering damages from the government. One man became so abusive that he had to be put in irons, but most of them merely muttered.

Captain Cartwright was very anxious to



“THE STARBOARD BOATS WERE LOWERED.”

patch up the hull of his prize and tow her into port, but her injuries proved to be beyond repair, and she had to be abandoned. No incriminating evidence was found aboard her, although the hold was too full of water to admit of thorough exploration. She went down a few minutes after the prize-crew left her, and the Idaho proceeded to Key West.

As soon as he arrived there, Captain Cartwright turned over his prisoners to the civil authorities and telegraphed to Washington an account of what he had done.

Then the reporters came down on him.

Now it has already been intimated that Captain Cartwright did not like reporters. He had no objection to editors or staff writers. He numbered several among his personal friends. But for reporters he cherished an extreme aversion. His wife had been trying for years to convince him that there were various sorts of reporters and that he ought to discriminate between them. But his conception of the type was rigid. It included glibness, brazenness, vulgarity, prying curi-

osity, a ghoulish lust for the unpleasant, a willingness to invade the most sacred privacies, a disregard of truth, a disregard of decency, and a complete lack of reverence for things that ought to be revered. In a word, it represented to him the incarnation of enterprising flippancy.

To the first newspaper man who came on board at Key West, the Captain accorded a brief audience, in which he communicated the bare facts of the chase and sinking of the Bell Buoy.

"That is all I have to say," he added, pushing back his chair and rising in a manner which left no alternative, even to a reporter, but to rise too.

"But, Captain, what is going to be done with these men now?"

"I know nothing about that. It rests with the courts."

"Will they all be tried or only the leaders?"

"I have just told you that I know nothing about it."

"How did you learn about this alleged embarkation of arms and men in the first place?"

"That is something I prefer not to discuss."

"Have you any positive proof that they were breaking the laws?"

"I shall say what I know on that subject when I am called as a witness to testify in court."

"If you can't prove that they were filibustering, will the government have to pay damages for the sinking of the ship?"

"I haven't considered that question."

"I should like to have a few details about —"

"No, sir. I think I've already told you that I have nothing more to say."

"In that case I suppose I may as well bid you good morning, Captain."

"Why, yes, I think so," he agreed. "Good morning."

"The old man's a regular Turk," the reporter confided to another representative of the press, whom he met coming aboard.

"That so?" said the other, jauntily. "Oh, I'll manage him all right."

"Wish you joy of him," muttered the first.

The second young man, being warned, adopted a conciliatory and somewhat oleaginous manner that was peculiarly annoying to the Captain, who dismissed him even more brusquely than his predecessor.

After that he gave orders that no reporters were to be allowed on board the ship under any pretext. He had his clerk prepare a brief type-written account of the event, which he directed to be shown at the gangway to every reporter who came for news.

Balked in their attempt to get the story of the Idaho's adventure from her commander, or even from the officers and crew unless they lay in wait for them ashore, the reporters naturally turned for picturesque details to the members of the late filibustering expedition, who supplied them plentifully. Time hung heavy on their hands in the Key West jail, and they were glad to talk, glad also of the opportunity to pose as martyrs and air their grievances.

Thus it came about that Captain Cartwright awoke one morning to find himself pilloried for public obloquy in every newspaper of the country. He was called a "gold-laced martinet," a "cold-blooded brute," a "quarter-deck tyrant," a "would-be murderer," and it was even intimated by one particularly yellow sheet that he was in the pay of Spain!

Mrs. Cartwright's indignation knew no bounds. She could not understand her husband's perfect equanimity. She would have liked to sue the whole American press for libel.

"There are some sources," he wrote her, "from which abuse is more flattering than praise. As long as my conscience is easy and the Department approves my action, nothing else concerns me."

"I know you've been snubbing reporters again," she wrote, "and they are retaliating."

"Very likely," he replied, but showed no further interest in the matter.

What laid the last straw on Mrs. Cartwright's exasperation was the fact that an-

other naval officer, Commander Morrow of the Springfield, had been lauded to the skies a few months before for catching a filibuster and had been written up in all the newspapers as the hero of a brilliant exploit. But Commander Morrow had an undifferentiating social nature. He regarded his fellow-men primarily as an audience for his humorous stories, and classed them according to the degree of appreciation they exhibited. After spending several months watching for filibusters, and having told his whole series of anecdotes to his officers so often that their laughter had become perfunctory, he keenly enjoyed the calls of the reporters. He gave them cigars and something to drink and asked them to come again. At parting, he laid his hands on their shoulders and confided to them in an undertone, trusting to them as men of honor not to repeat it, some trivial matter that might with perfect impunity have been shouted from the house-tops. By this simple device, he won their undying gratitude and harmed no one.

Mrs. Cartwright was ready enough to laugh at the celebrity Commander Morrow had acquired and the incense burned at his feet by admiring reporters. But she could not help resenting the radical difference in the way her husband was being treated.

"The poor dear Captain!" wrote Sue from California. "I shall never believe anything I read in a newspaper again. It is too outrageous."

"The truly elect have been reviled by the populace from the beginning of the world," wrote Barbara. "Don't let it worry you, dear Mrs. Cartwright. Our Captain's in excellent company."

CHAPTER XV

THE blood of the Forty-niners is a legacy of unrest which keeps all good Californians on the move.

After she got back from the East, Sue spent a month or so in San Francisco, a month or so camping in the Yosemite, a month or so on her brother's ranch near Los Angeles, went to Japan for a few months with her father, who was worn out from too close application to the business of the bank, and then, on her return, suddenly decided to try Settlement work.

She kept at it in San Francisco for a few months, but did not feel satisfied with what she was accomplishing, and imagined it would be a great advantage to her work there if she went to New York and learned eastern methods. They have at heart a very great respect for all things eastern in the West, just as they have

for all things European in the East. In its last analysis, it is merely the reverence rendered by Youth to Age. Youth's self-confidence is largely a matter of bluff. It really credits Age with a superhuman amount of wisdom, although it does not often say so, for fear Age will be unduly puffed up.

Sue took up her residence in a little community of earnest young women on Rivington Street. She did not find it so different from the San Francisco settlement as she had expected, but there were things to learn, and she plunged heart and soul into the task of learning them.

"Play while you play and work while you work," was Sue's motto. She did not inform any one of her presence in New York for several weeks, and then made herself known only to Mrs. Cartwright, and begged that lady to tell no one of her being there.

"It will rest me to come up here and talk to you sometimes, dear Mrs. Cartwright," she said. They were sitting side by side on the divan, and Sue was holding Mrs. Cartwright's

hand in both of hers and patting it affectionately. "But you can readily understand that I haven't either the time or the heart just now for frivolities. I *couldn't* go from Rivington Street to a dinner, or a dance, or the opera. The sudden contrast would be too great a shock. It would *hurt*. But most people can't understand that. They would think I needed distraction and would try to get me to go to things, and they would come down there to call and be dreadfully in the way. So please promise you won't breathe it to a soul."

"Of course, if you wish it—"

"I do!"

"But I don't approve of it a bit. I don't see what your mother was thinking about, to let you go down there."

"Why, I'm afraid I didn't consult her, Mrs. Cartwright. I just told her I was going."

Mrs. Cartwright exclaimed in horror.

"You westerners have most extraordinary ideas," she commented. "At what period of your nursery career do your parents abdicate their authority?"

"It's done gradually. My brothers joined a self-government club at eight or ten. The boys pledged themselves to maintain a high standard of manliness, truthfulness, and honor. They appointed a committee to chastise any of their number who fell below the requirements. The parents pledged themselves not to interfere."

"Remarkable! And it worked?"

"Splendidly."

"And did they teach each other manners, too?"

"Well, no. They were supposed to get those by imitation at home,—just as they had learned to talk. I won't say that there were not parental suggestions along that line sometimes. But the idea was to interfere as little as possible. What you do for yourself in the way of character-building is so much more useful than what some one else does for you."

"Wonderful!" said Mrs. Cartwright, but it was evident that she disapproved. "Now Elizabeth wanted to take up her abode down

there among the microbes at one time, but we wouldn't let her."

"Poor Elizabeth," murmured Sue, "how she must have suffered under that patriarchal system! She was not lacking in character, Elizabeth."

"Why, of course not." Mrs. Cartwright looked surprised.

"And I suppose she took it all amiably because she was so fond of you?"

"I don't think Elizabeth found the behests of her parents burdensome. She had been used all her life to discipline. She was brought up in an atmosphere of it. The obedience that was exacted of her was far less arbitrary than what the service exacts of her father."

"True. The navy spirit again. It may have helped her. But why wouldn't you let her go to the Settlement, Mrs. Cartwright?"

"Because, with all due deference to you, Sue, it's such perfect nonsense. What do you girls accomplish, besides making yourselves profoundly uncomfortable?"

"Oh, Mrs. Cartwright!"

Sue flushed and paused. The life she was leading meant so much to her. The thing she wished to do, the thing she believed she was helping to do, was enormous, but if one had to gauge it by concrete accomplishment, it did look rather small.

"We are trying," she began gropingly, "to bridge over the terrible chasm between the so-called upper and lower halves."

Mrs. Cartwright smiled.

"Oh, we don't flatter ourselves we are doing it, — not altogether, — but we are helping. We don't expect miracles."

"I dare say I seem very unsympathetic. But it appeared to me the girls spent their time playing jack-straws and old maid with a lot of small children, who might just as well have been playing those interesting games by themselves. I don't believe any amount of old maid and jack-straws will bridge the chasm."

"I don't know," said Sue. "It might."

"Now if you were distributing coal and potatoes, I could understand *that*."

"Oh, we don't approve of almsgiving. It breeds a race of paupers. It makes the chasm broader than ever. We try to help people to help themselves."

"If you taught them really useful things, — dressmaking or carpentry or something of that sort — "

"We do, when they want to learn those things, but mostly they don't care to."

"Exactly! And so you give them music lessons and dancing lessons!"

"Don't you think they need some recreation in their lives? And isn't it a gain if we offer them a sort that is innocent?"

"Sue, I'm afraid I'm hopeless. I appreciate your good intentions fully. But here are a lot of girls leaving comfortable homes and going down into the slums to fill their lungs with vile air, keeping up an elaborate fiction that they are not philanthropists, so that they can meet their neighbors on a plane of social equality, giving lessons in music and dancing to people who haven't proper food to eat or decent clothes to wear, trying to prevent labor

troubles by playing jack-straws with the strikers' children — Well, Sue, I can't help it. It looks to me like the Bab Ballads ! ”

Sue laughed, with her large tolerance.

“ I'm afraid you're beyond my powers of conversion, Mrs. Cartwright. But if I had you down there for a week, I think you'd convert yourself. And at the end of the second week, you'd be turning socialist.”

“ Not I ! But, for heaven's sake, Sue, you don't mean that *you* are bitten by that form of insanity ? I suppose you'll be throwing bombs next.”

“ Dear Mrs. Cartwright, don't tell me that you, with all your discernment, don't understand the difference between socialism and anarchy ? ”

“ How natural that sounds ! I suppose if Elizabeth said that to me once, she said it a thousand times.”

“ And you still class them together ? Poor Elizabeth ! ”

“ Look here, Sue Ballinger, I won't have you pitying Elizabeth. Do I look like an ogre ? ”

"Oh, the benevolent despots are the worst kind! You can fight the wicked ones, but true nobility bends its back and accepts the yoke of the benevolent tyrant—for love's sake."

"You impertinent child!" laughed Mrs. Cartwright.

Just then Wiggles came in, and Sue jumped for him with a cry of welcome. But Mrs. Cartwright seized her arm detainingly.

"Don't touch him, Sue!" she exclaimed "You can't kiss him unless you go out and disinfect yourself first. You must be covered an inch deep with all sorts of microbes."

With a comical expression of despair, Sue let her hands fall at her side.

"I can't kiss you, Wiggles dearest, but I love you just as much as ever, and I'll throw you a whole armful of kisses across the room. Catch!" And she went through the pantomime.

Wiggles looked highly puzzled.

"Mrs. Cartwright, will you please give your immaculate grandson the contents of that package on the table? I bought it at an uptown

shop, and I feel sure I didn't touch it. So if you will take off the wrapping-paper, which I *did* touch, I don't believe he'll be contaminated. To be sure, it was made in the first place by a colony of Bohemians just around the corner from Rivington Street, but — ”

“ You can jeer as much as you like, Sue. I dare say we all run frightful risks every day, — certainly every time we get into a street-car. But that isn't any reason for running *more* risks.”

Meantime she unwrapped the perambulating ostrich, wound it up, and started it across the floor to Wiggles, who straightway became unconscious of all other mundane affairs.

Sue glanced out of the window, noted the gathering dusk, and reluctantly reached for her wraps. At that moment a couple of cards were brought in to Mrs. Cartwright, and as their owners followed at the servant's heels, Sue could not get away without meeting them.

They proved to be Mr. Fairchild and Mr. McMasters. Both were so unmistakably glad

to see her that she would have been hardly human if she had not felt a thrill of pleasure too. Being Sue, the swift color that leaped to her cheeks, the light that flashed in her eyes, the smile that dimpled around her lips, made her utterly adorable.

It was Mrs. Cartwright who told of Sue's wish to remain hidden from her friends. The young men treated it as a joke, and Sue did not insist on it. She even let young Fairchild see her home, and made no protest to Mr. McMasters's assertion that he was coming down some evening very soon to call.

Just now he stood at the window watching Sue and her escort walk briskly along outside the railing of the park. A dry snow was drifting lazily down on them. Their footsteps made the first dark blots on the new white covering of the sidewalk.

"They *do* look well together," he said, with a cheerfulness that suggested effort.

"He's not half good enough for her," Mrs. Cartwright returned sharply.

Mr. McMasters sighed.

"No, that's true, but no one else is either."

"I could think of some one who comes a good deal nearer to it than Harry Fairchild."

He looked at her for a moment in doubt. Then a deep flush spread slowly over his face.

"Thank you, Mrs. Cartwright, a thousand times. But it's no use. Her manner to me is absolutely sisterly."

"Well, what do you expect? Isn't your manner to her absolutely brotherly?"

"I shouldn't dare let it be anything else."

"I don't often meddle in things that don't concern me —"

He murmured a vague protest at the implication.

"My excuse must be that I think so much of you both. Perhaps I am mistaken about the way you feel. You haven't ever confided in me. Perhaps I am mistaken about the way Sue feels. She hasn't confided in me either."

"You're most awfully good, Mrs. Cartwright. Do you mind if I say good-by and go out to walk it off? I've got to get my head cool before I can think. You've rather bowled

me over, you know, and I don't know exactly where I stand."

When she was left alone, Mrs. Cartwright beat her brow in simulated despair.

"I've been in this world for half a century," she remarked, "and I think this is my first attempt at match-making. Also it shall be my last. I don't believe he's in love with her at all. His emotion was pure embarrassment. He must think I was flinging her at his head; and probably Sue is engaged all the time to some man in California!"

"I'm glad it hasn't made him stay away from her," she reflected to herself, about a week later, when Sue dropped in for tea and began telling her of Mr. McMasters's call.

"He was such a dear," Sue confided to her. "I was busy with a meeting of the Mothers' Club when he came, and I didn't know what on earth to do with him. But he took it all in his own hands and said he'd come to the meeting too. I led him in with fear and trembling—I'll tell you why presently—and introduced him all around, and he was *perfect*!

He met them with absolute courtesy and absolute naturalness. I suppose you think 'Why shouldn't he?' — but it doesn't always follow. When the business part of the meeting was over, he picked up a banjo that was lying on the window-seat and began strumming on it and singing sailor songs. I'd never heard them before and found them fascinating, and so did the mothers. In between-times he spun them all sorts of navy yarns. They think he's the most delightful person they ever met; and I've received requests from a young men's club, a young women's club, three boys' clubs, and a girls' club to get him down there to sing for them."

"I'm glad he made such a hit. I didn't know he was so resourceful; but I should have expected him to behave with entire propriety. What did you mean by your 'fear and trembling'?"

"Mrs. Cartwright, it makes my blood boil whenever I think of it! It was that Fairchild cub, the afternoon I was here before. He went home with me, you know, and of course I had

to ask him in, and some of our neighbors were there, and he — Mrs. Cartwright, I was mortified enough to sink through the floor! — he tried to talk over their heads to me. He made fun of them to me before their faces. Did he think they were *fools*, not to understand? He acted as if the whole thing were a show. I wish I could have told him what I thought of him! Oh, he has nice enough manners at a dinner, and he dances like an angel —”

“*Do* angels dance well?” Mrs. Cartwright murmured.

“But when you get down to basic facts, he’s not a gentleman!”

“Perhaps I didn’t make such a mess of playing Providence after all,” thought Mrs. Cartwright to herself.

CHAPTER XVI

THE Idaho, after being relieved on the Florida patrol, and passing some months, not too agreeably, between Colon, Gonaives, and La Guayra, had come north to the Brooklyn navy yard to go into dock.

On the morning of the 16th of February Captain and Mrs. Cartwright and Wiggles sat down to breakfast at their little round table in the hotel dining room. After giving his order to the waiter, the Captain casually unfolded the morning paper that lay beside his plate. Great black headlines in letters two inches long ran across the first page. As he looked his eyes dilated. His lips moved, but no sound came from them. His face was ashy.

"What is it? What is it?" cried his wife.

"The Maine is blown up," he said, in a curiously even voice, turning the paper for her to see.

"What!" she exclaimed, horror-struck. "The Maine? In Havana? By the Spaniards?"

His face grew very stern.

"No, no. That's impossible. You mustn't say such a thing, not whisper it, not think it. It *must* have been an accident."

His vehemence implied so much rebuke that she felt ashamed of her suspicion.

"Were there many lives lost?" she faltered, eager to know, yet afraid of the answer.

"Up into the hundreds. There are no full reports yet."

By this time acquaintances from other tables were crowding around to discuss the matter with the Captain. They felt that he, being a naval officer, must somehow be able to give them inside information.

His wife shielded him the best she could.

She saw that he was too much shocked to talk. Presently he pushed away his untasted breakfast and left the room to go to his ship.

Early in the afternoon he came back.

"You have seen the extras?" he asked his wife.

"Yes."

"I wouldn't believe it this morning. It seemed too monstrous. But I'm afraid you were right. I'm afraid it was the Spaniards."

"What makes you think so?"

"The details given in the despatches. Everything points to an external explosion."

He went over the telegrams with her, explaining the parts that seemed to him significant.

"If they *did* blow up the Maine," she cried, "the whole Spanish nation ought to be swept off the face of the earth!"

"If they did it, there will be vengeance," he replied grimly.

"Those poor fellows!" murmured Mrs. Cartwright, with pictures of death and muti-

lation crowding on her inner vision. "Who were the officers, Julius?"

He got out the navy register, and they looked over the complement of the Maine, with a word here and there, as they came upon the name of some special friend. It was not yet certainly known who was lost and who saved.

"Poor fellows!" whispered Mrs. Cartwright again.

The Captain was pacing up and down the room as though it were a quarter-deck.

"They shall have all Havana for a funeral pyre," he said at last.

"Yes," she cried tensely. "Oh, I wish I could fight too! You are lucky, Julius."

"I am lucky in having the Idaho. Suppose this had happened last year, when I couldn't get a ship!"

"It would have been heart-breaking," she said.

"Heart-breaking," he repeated fervently.

"You always said there would be war," she reminded him.

"It was bound to come. But I didn't foresee anything like this."

"It's so much worse than if they had been killed in battle."

"Oh, in battle! That's our business. And one has a chance to fight back. But to be assassinated —"

"Stabbed in the back. It's the treacherous Latin blood."

"And yet they are compatriots of the Cid!"

"Degenerate ones."

"Spawn of hell," he muttered, then came out roundly with "'Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord.'"

"We aren't going to leave it to Him, though," protested Mrs. Cartwright.

"We are His instruments," said the Captain, solemnly.

After the first cry of horror that went up from Cape Cod to Cape Mendocino, came long passion-filled days when the nation held its breath and waited.

The naval court of inquiry was appointed and sent to Havana to investigate the cause

of the Maine's explosion. Selected for calm and judicial temperament, as well as for superior mental acumen, the little group of officers who formed the court had every trace of partisanship crushed out by the fearful weight of responsibility resting on them. They knew the government hoped for evidence that would acquit Spain and make the loss of the ship a dispensation of Providence. They knew the hot-heads of their own service hoped for evidence that would damn the whole Spanish nation to the lowest depths of hell. But their judgment was not swayed a hair's breadth by either hope. Alone, almost of all their countrymen, they sat, passionless, unmoved, and sought for Truth.

The yellow journals, clamoring for immediate war, howled and raged and foamed at the mouth, accusing the government of cowardice and venality. Cooler heads insisted that judgment be suspended till the verdict of the court was received. The crime alleged was so stupendous, so hideous, so unheard-of that they hesitated to believe it possible. It

was too bad to be true. Yet the too-bad-to-be-true *has* been true thousands of times since our ancestors lost their tails and developed consciences. The deeds of the Boxers just the other day in China were too bad to be true. But—alas—they *were* true. The acts of our own lynching mobs are too bad to be true. But—God help us!—they *are* true. The question was one to be decided on the evidence, not on *a priori* theories of likelihood.

If the Maine was blown up by Spaniards, then, unless the Spanish government disowned the act and meted out swift justice to its guilty subjects, war was inevitable.

One commanding figure rose above the seething and the tumult of those days, a steadfast figure, against which the waves of public opinion beat pitilessly. The President was striving, with all his strength of heart and soul and mind, to avert the calamity of even a successful war. For he had seen war face to face in his youth, and knew the cost of it in blood and tears. And

it might not be successful. It was for him to weigh the chances of disaster. Individual enthusiasts might scorn to consider consequences. It was his duty to consider them. In the light of subsequent events it is hard to realize that victory was far from being a foregone conclusion. The President hoped for it, of course, expected it, perhaps, but certainly he did not feel sure of it. The army and the navy were untried. We were a nation preëminently of peace. We had met no foreign foe since the Mexican war, no foreign foe our match in strength since 1812. Our critics abroad were freely telling us of the naval and military superiority of Spain. Over-confidence was proverbially an American failing. The critics *might* be right.

The navy, meanwhile, outside the solemn circle of the court of inquiry, was straining like a bloodhound at its leash. Free from the awful responsibilities that weighed on the Chief Magistrate and on the court, it naturally took a more immediate and personal view of the crisis. Passionately convinced

that the Maine's destruction was compassed by Spaniards, it regarded itself as the heaven-ordained instrument of vengeance. This was the navy's quarrel. It should be the navy's war. What had been to the rest of the country an appalling, but rather impersonal, calamity, was to the navy a domestic tragedy. Absolute coolness and impartiality could hardly be expected from it. "Remember the Maine" was not a Christian, but a wholly human phrase.

The days pending the investigation were by no means idle days. Hoping always to avert war, the government must yet in common prudence prepare for it. There was plenty of work to be done. Navy yards and arsenals were running day and night. Plans were being made for coast defence and for the conversion of merchant vessels and yachts into auxiliary cruisers and gunboats. All this was merely precautionary. Nothing was done that would commit the country to war in advance of the findings of the court.

On board ships already in commission,

like the Idaho, every nerve was strained to bring both equipment and personnel to the highest point of efficiency. The men worked at the old familiar drills with a new zest. Sighting a great gun or screwing on a torpedo head had suddenly become a vital function.

In the wardroom the officers held fiery discussions over every extra bulletin giving the latest guess about the evidence before the court and the latest rumor about the probable action of Congress. The youngsters put up their money freely on the absorbing question of war or no-war, the enthusiastic pros venturing their dollars on what they hoped for with all their hearts, the long-headed cons hedging against fate and providing themselves with at least a crumb of consolation in case the war should not materialize.

It was much the same in the forecastle, except that the spirit there was more bitter. There was hardly a man beyond his first enlistment but had friends and former ship-

mates among those lost on the Maine. It was a clan feud with them. Their blood was at fever heat, and their one longing was to fight.

The Captain in his lonely cabin did plenty of thinking, but kept his thoughts to himself. In his more conspicuous position, he had to guard his tongue, lest his utterances should compromise the government. It was fortunate for Captain Cartwright that he was in a home port and could go every afternoon to dine and spend the night at the hotel. His talks with his wife acted as a safety valve to his feelings.

Mrs. Cartwright was a patriot, and a fighting patriot to the core. No old Roman matron sending her sons to battle was actuated by a spirit more heroic or more self-forgetful. There were many like her, but of course there were other types too,—the timid, weeping, clinging kind whose love of their husbands could not rise above solicitude for their personal safety, who hoped and prayed that they might be kept at the navy

yards or attached to ships not likely to meet the enemy.

Mrs. Cartwright was so cheerful, so optimistic, so positively eager for the fray, that in some quarters she was freely accused of heartlessness. Yet no one who understood her devotion to her husband could doubt that if she was willing to expose him to Spanish bullets, it was the supremest proof she could give of her patriotism, and that she would have exposed herself to them with far greater cheerfulness.

Among those most firmly convinced of Mrs. Cartwright's coldness of heart was an old maiden aunt of the Captain's, who, ever since the destruction of the *Maine*, had been writing him frantic letters urging him to resign his commission. These letters pierced like rays of sunshine through the tragic gloom of the atmosphere and afforded the Cartwrights infinite amusement.

To have characterized the old lady's attitude as either cowardly or dishonorable would have been to wrong her utter guile-

lessness. Reasons slipped from her ungrasping mentality as easily as from an insistent child's. Finding her appeal to her nephew without result, she had written to his wife, who, she took it for granted, would share her feelings. She never got over the shock of Mrs. Cartwright's reply. She had always before supposed that Clara loved her husband. But now it was all too evident that she did not. Poor Julius! It was doubtless his wife's indifference that made him so willing to be killed. But she, his aunt, who had loved him so tenderly from his babyhood, would not desert him now. She had a last resource, in the efficacy of which she placed great confidence, though she had hesitated, for personal reasons, about using it. But she could not be over-fastidious when Julius's welfare was at stake. She mastered some sad and sacred memories of her girlhood and set in motion the machinery that was to save her beloved nephew's life.

CHAPTER XVII

NOTHING could have exceeded the dismay of Captain Cartwright when, on opening a long official envelope from the Navy Department one morning about the middle of March, he found that it contained orders detaching him from the command of the Idaho on the reporting of his relief.

What did it mean? What *could* it mean? Who was his unknown enemy? Was it possible that John C. O'Meara had climbed into a position of sufficient eminence to reach him even under a different administration? That his vindictiveness would be equal to it, the Captain did not doubt, but that he could have the power hardly seemed credible. Was it possible that the reporters who had campaigned so zealously against him the previous summer were still in arms and had at last won over the Department to their side?

These orders meant the blasting of legiti-

mate hopes of distinction, which he had nourished during thirty-three years of peace, biding his time for just the chance now being snatched from him. But they meant far more. They meant the absolute ruin of his career; they meant branding him for life as a man in whose courage or capacity the Department lacked confidence. Death would have been welcome a thousand times rather than such a blow at that intangible, but infinitely precious possession, his reputation. The old half-forgotten nightmare of the court of inquiry sank into insignificance in comparison with this affront. The accusation of appointing and discharging workmen for political purposes was an absurdity on the face of it and easily disproved. But to be deprived of his command almost in sight of the enemy, with no other ship given him in place of it and no chance offered for vindication, — men have died for less.

“Go to Washington,” urged his wife. “Find out what it means. Try to get these orders revoked. You have the right to demand an explanation,”

He hesitated. In all his naval career — thirty-seven years of it — he had never asked to have orders revoked that had been sent him. He had taken what came, no matter how disagreeable, and made the best of it.

"Somebody has to do it," he would say. "If I got out of it, some other man would have to go in my place."

He had never asked for a pleasant billet. He had never used the faintest shadow of political or social influence for any purpose. He had not set foot in the corridors of the Navy Department for upward of twenty years. He did not care to now. But —

"It's that — or blow my brains out, I suppose," he said quietly.

A horrible fear clutched at Mrs. Cartwright's heart. She was not perfectly sure that he did not mean it. Instinctively, though, she hid her doubt from him. If he supposed she took what he said seriously, it might influence him.

"Leave that to the Spaniards!" she jeered. "Besides, it would invalidate the insurance policies."

A bit of downright brutality is not amiss now and then for jolting a man into sanity.

"I will go," he said.

The bureau chief on whom he called when he reached the Department greeted him by his Naval Academy nickname, Borgia, — a sobriquet of delightful unaptness derived by way of Cæsar from his baptismal name. There were only a few men left in the service who called him Borgia, and the Captain's heart gave a reminiscent thump at the sound of it.

"I've come up to see who's responsible for my detachment from the Idaho," he blurted out, "and whether anything can be done about it."

"Why, Borgia," exclaimed the other man, "there's been a big mistake somewhere. I was told that you were detached at your own request."

"At my request?" cried the Captain.

"At your request, on the score of ill health. I thought you must be on your death-bed. I knew you wouldn't give up that ship if you could stand on your feet,"

"I wouldn't have given her up, if I *had* been on my death-bed,—not till after the funeral. Do I look sick?"

"No, you don't."

"Then somebody's an infernal liar."

"Looks like it, doesn't it? But there must be some sort of a mistake, Borgia. It was your senator who put in the request."

"My senator? Which one? Never laid eyes on him. It's a piece of confounded rascality. He wanted me out of the way to get the ship for somebody else. It's bad enough to be ousted from my berth by a political pull, but to have the damned hypocrite pretend he did it at *my request* is a little bit more than a man can be expected to stand."

The Chief of Bureau had been vainly trying to interrupt him. Now at last he got in his word.

"You're all wrong, Borgia. Whatever the explanation of the tangle is, it's not that. He's not that sort of man at all. He's the soul of honor and high-mindedness. Why don't you

call him up on the telephone and ask him about it? He ought to be in his committee room at this hour."

Captain Cartwright adopted the suggestion.

"Go easy," advised the bureau chief, as the Captain took down the receiver. "Remember, he's one of the Nestors of the Senate, and a man absolutely above suspicion."

Having done his duty by offering these suggestions, the Admiral was able to enjoy with a clear conscience the picturesque vigor of the language he overheard.

Captain Cartwright was not by any means a profane man, but his feelings on this occasion several times got beyond the bounds of ordinary English, and the fact that the man he was accusing of "unwarrantable meddling" was the distinguished senior senator from his own state weighed not a grain in the balance against his righteous indignation.

At last the Captain hung up the receiver and turned around with the ejaculation, —

"The Lord save us from our friends!"

"What is it?" asked the Chief of Bureau.

"I have a venerable maiden aunt, who knew him when they both were young," the Captain explained. "She is a nervous soul and objects to war. She asked him to secure my detachment, and he took it for granted I had authorized her to do so, — went off half-cocked and thought he was doing me a kindness!"

"By George!" cried the Chief of Bureau, slapping his knee, "I wouldn't like to be in the shoes of that aunt of yours when she hears from you."

"The interesting point just now is, what am I to do?"

"Suppose we go in and see the Secretary," he suggested, and taking the Captain's arm, conducted him to the official head of the Navy Department.

"Mr. Secretary," he said, his lips twitching into a smile under his grizzled beard, "I have to present to you the most unhappy man in the service, Captain Cartwright."

The Secretary's manner was icy. He bowed without extending his hand. But as the Chief of Bureau told the story, his face cleared, and

at the end he held out his hand with a cordial expression of sympathy and regret.

"Take a seat, Captain, and we'll see what we can do about it. The Admiral here will help us."

"Can't I keep the Idaho?" asked Captain Cartwright. "That seems the simplest way out of it, and certainly is the one that suits me best."

"Unfortunately, I'm afraid not. The orders have already been sent to Captain Kingsbury to relieve you. He has been promised the Idaho, and relies on it. He mustn't be left in the lurch. He hasn't done anything, you know. He hasn't even got an aunt."

The Captain achieved a sickly smile.

"But he would be no worse off than he was before."

"Yes, because there were other ships to choose from day before yesterday that have since been assigned. Everybody is applying for a ship, you know."

"One of the big ocean liners that are to be turned into commerce destroyers is

still unassigned," suggested the Chief of Bureau.

"Well, you can have her, Captain Cartwright. Twelve thousand tons, — nearly twice as large as the Idaho. How will that suit you?"

"Not at all," said the Captain, dejectedly. "She can't fight. She'll have the battery of a gunboat. I don't want a great hulk of a ship that will have to turn tail and run from a cruiser a third her size. She's only good to chase merchantmen and get prize money."

"Some people don't regard prize money as a matter altogether beneath their notice," observed the Secretary.

"Give them the commerce destroyers, then. What I want is a fighting ship."

The Secretary glanced over some memoranda which he drew from a pigeonhole of his desk.

"How would a coast defence vessel suit you, carrying the biggest guns afloat?"

"Where is she?"

"At San Francisco."

"Good God, no! What can she do at San Francisco?"

"If the Spanish fleet in the Philippines should defeat our Asiatic squadron and attack the Pacific coast —"

"Not one chance in a thousand."

"Well, there is just one other thing," said the Secretary, with an accent of finality. "There is the Portland, now at Hong Kong. I got a telegram this morning stating that her captain has been invalided home and that she is temporarily in the command of the executive officer."

"But I don't want to go out there," pleaded Captain Cartwright. "All the heavy fighting will be off the coast of Cuba."

"There will be plenty of fighting in the Pacific."

"A mere side issue."

"Here are some memoranda concerning the Spanish fleet in the Philippines and the defences of Manila. You might look them over and let me know in half an hour what you have decided on. You will see that the contending fleets are not unevenly matched, and on the outcome of the battle to be fought there depends the safety of the Pacific coast."

Captain Cartwright and the Chief of Bureau had risen to their feet.

"I don't need to spend half an hour deciding, Mr. Secretary. If I can't keep the Idaho, or have another fighting ship in the North Atlantic Squadron, I will take the Portland. She is too small for my rank and not very new, and I don't think there's any glory to be gotten in the Philippines. But there's honest work to be done as far as it goes, and somebody has to play second fiddle. The only thing I am afraid of is, that war will be declared and the fleet sail from Hong Kong before I get there."

"I think not. Not if we can help it. It is very important that the Baltimore should reach the squadron with ammunition, and she won't be arriving for at least a month yet. You can take the first mail steamer from San Francisco, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir."

"Your orders will be made out."

"I congratulate you, Borgia," said the Chief of Bureau, as they passed out together. "The

Commodore's a fighter. You'll have plenty of fun out there."

The Captain shook his head sadly.

"It was the best I could do, but there's not much in it," he observed regretfully. "Small ships, small fleets, small issues,—a mere incident in the drama. But it's better than nothing."

CHAPTER XVIII

SOMEWHAT to Captain Cartwright's surprise and very much to his delight, his wife announced her intention of going with him as far as Hong Kong. They had forty-eight hours to spare before starting overland, which Mrs. Cartwright declared would give her ample time for packing, as they were already living in trunks at a hotel. She not only made good her boast and had everything ready inside the time limit, but was able to get off a train ahead of her husband and stop over a few hours in Albany to let Wiggles's paternal grandparents have a parting glimpse of him.

Mrs. Cartwright rather resented the existence of this superfluous set of grandparents, but she tried to do her duty by them. It was especially magnanimous of her to visit

them now, because she clearly foresaw that the other grandmother would give her trouble. Old Mrs. Whittemore did, in fact, strenuously object to Wiggles's setting out for the Orient, and was unreasonable enough to propose, with some insistence, that he should be left with her.

Wiggles's father was on a ship in European waters, exact locality unknown, and could not be consulted. But his handing over his baby boy, at Elizabeth's request, to the upbringing of Elizabeth's mother had been absolute. His own mother was, therefore, at a disadvantage, and could only plead the child's best good, as she saw it, and the risk of taking him to such remote, outlandish countries.

Now Elizabeth had been around the world before she cut her milk teeth, and from Mrs. Cartwright's point of view steamers and trains and hotels were as good places as any other to bring up a child in, if only one used sufficient zeal and discretion. So she brushed aside the views of the stay-at-home grandmother and laughed at her foolish alarms.

Mrs. Whittemore, on the other hand, considered Mrs. Cartwright so erratic in her manner of life and thought as to be barely respectable. For a woman past fifty to start off on forty-eight hours' notice to the antipodes seemed to her almost indelicate, and when she must needs take her poor little four-year-old grandson along with her, the vagary became positively criminal.

Added to the ordinary dangers of travel were the war risks which seemed to be imminent. Supposing war was declared while they were at sea, and their ship was captured by a Spanish man-of-war, or, worse still, by a Spanish privateer? In vain Mrs. Cartwright explained that the steamer on which their passage was engaged flew the British flag and was owned in Liverpool. A trifling technicality of that sort could not blot out the lurid pictures conjured up by grandmotherly fear.

Train-time found them, however, duly ensconced in the overland limited, with the Captain at their side, and the poor overruled

paternal grandparents forlornly waving their handkerchiefs from the platform.

Up to this time Wiggles had done very little travelling, but the instincts of the rover were in his blood, and he took to it like a duck to water, adapting himself with cheerful philosophy to the most unpropitious circumstances. His good nature was proof against every inversion of his habits, whether in sleeping or dressing arrangements, in bills-of-fare, or times and seasons. His interest in changing scenes and faces was unfailing, but quiet and dignified. Nothing surprised him, though everything interested him. There was not a single drop of provincialism in his blood. He was born a child of the world. He fraternized in ready friendliness with conductors, brakemen, porters, and fellow-passengers, then with officers and sailors and Chinese cabin-boys, and later still with the many-hued denizens of the Orient. He had no prejudices of caste or race or color.

"*Nil humanum a se alienum putat*," Captain Cartwright adapted laboriously.

His wife always laughed at him for the affection with which he clung to his rusty Latin, left over from the days before he entered the Naval Academy.

Wiggles regarded all men as potential friends, and seldom found his confidence misplaced. But there was an Englishman aboard the steamer who thought to tease him by telling him how the Spaniards were going to "lick the Yankees" in the prospective war. Wiggles tried to convince him of error by earnest argument, till, finding his protestations ignored, and stung by the jeering tone of his tormentor, he suddenly flew at him, tooth and nail, like a little fury, and had to be dragged away by main force. He was punished for conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman; but, in view of the circumstances, he was not required to apologize, merely to promise his grandmother that there would be no more violence. There was none, but he never passed the obnoxious Englishman on deck or stairway without protruding his lower lip at him, as a sign — and a very expressive one — of disapproval. No

amount of punishment could persuade him to give up this habit, and his grandparents finally adopted the practice of looking the other way.

It was more than twenty years since Mrs. Cartwright had crossed the Pacific. The Captain had made a three years' cruise at that time on the Asiatic station, and she and Elizabeth had followed him. It had been a very delightful epoch in many ways, and Mrs. Cartwright had always cherished its memories, without any expectation of renewing them. But now she "'eard the East a-callin'" and experienced strange thrills at the mere substitution of tiffin for luncheon and the sound of the dear ridiculous Pidjin English that she had to babble at the servants. Every day that brought them nearer to the Japanese coast increased her excitement and enthusiasm.

"She's like an old race-horse brought back on the track again," thought the Captain, admiringly; but he took good care not to put his thought into words, well knowing how his wife would receive such a comparison.

"It will seem like being young again, to be

following a ship with a little child, Julius," she said.

"After all, I believe you like the life," he returned, smiling at her.

"In spite of the way I abuse it? Yes, I suppose I must."

They both felt the sadness of its being Elizabeth's child, not Elizabeth, who was the companion of their travels; but it was characteristic of them that they made no reference to what occupied the foremost place in their minds. The loss of a child is like the loss of a leg. One must go through life thereafter maimed. But the brave-hearted cripple makes the best of his crutches and alludes to them as seldom as may be.

Mrs. Cartwright's was the universal mother-grief, — primitive, instinctive, primarily impersonal, because it was her *child* that was dead, only secondarily because it was Elizabeth. With her husband, the order was reversed. It was first and foremost his good comrade, the always understood, always understanding Elizabeth that he mourned, and after that

his daughter. With both of them, their loss was an ever-present load carried on hearts strong enough to bend under it without breaking, sweet enough not to be embittered by the gall of sorrow, large and just enough to look at the world sanely as before and to sympathize with the happiness of others.

The weather, though cold at times, was reasonably good all the way from San Francisco to Yokohama. Seasickness was a thing as unknown to Mrs. Cartwright as to her husband; and Wiggles, after the first day out, proved equally exempt. To be travelling together, instead of one on a man-of-war and the other on the next mail steamer, was a luxury entirely new in their experience. Had it not been for the expected war, they would have asked nothing better than to prolong the trip indefinitely. As it was, they could hardly control their impatience to reach Yokohama and be in cable communication with the world once more. Their constant fear was that war might be declared, and the fleet sail for the Philippines before the Captain could get to his ship. Mrs.

Cartwright, who always did everything in a hurry herself, credited governments with something of her own temperament, and did not see how war could be avoided so long. The Captain, on the other hand, knowing the necessity for delay on account of the unprepared state of the country, had more faith in being on time. And even if war should be declared, he felt reasonably sure that, although the fleet would have to leave Hong Kong, it would wait in some near-by Chinese port till the Baltimore arrived with its much-needed ammunition.

The Captain's nervousness showed only in his perpetual tramping up and down the deck, his wife's in every word and tone and movement.

They hailed the peak of Fuji, shining above the clouds, as an old friend, sacred with memories of the time when they and the world were young. But Mrs. Cartwright, at least, was inclined to rail at the impassive cone for not flashing them a message from Washington.

Their approach to the coast and progress up

the Bay of Tokio seemed interminable, although broken here and there by the recognition of some familiar landmark. That little village to the left should be Uraga, where they make the sweet *mizu-ame* that Elizabeth used to be so fond of. That other mountain peak, lesser than Fuji, but nearer, was O-Yama, of course. About yonder, Tomioka must lie, where the beach was so nice for bathing, and the crooked pine tree in front of the tea house was too good to be true. There was Mississippi Bay opening up, and just inside the western horn they could make out the thatched roofs of Sugita, famous for its plum blossoms. They rounded Treaty Point, the new Yokohama breakwater caught their attention, and then, at last, they slowed down to let the neatly uniformed Japanese health officers come aboard.

Every one pressed around them for news. Had the war begun?

"No, it is not suppose there shall be war," said the one who spoke English. "There shall be mediation of the Pope."

"So far so good," exclaimed the Captain, drawing in a long breath of relief. His wife's face was wreathed in smiles. They did not expect the Pope to avert the war, but that he should be able to postpone it suited them admirably.

With minds relieved on this point, they gave themselves up to the pleasures of reminiscence. Had he been alone, the Captain would probably have sat on the deck of the steamer, smoked a cigar, and sunk himself fathoms deep in old memories. But under his wife's more energetic guidance, every moment of the precious day the steamer lay in Yokohama became a pilgrimage. Mrs. Cartwright meant, not only to catch a glimpse of the old life herself and share it with her husband, but to introduce it to Wiggles. Old friends were notified, old servants summoned, old haunts revisited.

"Wiggles, this was your mother's *amah*," his grandmother told him, as a wrinkled, parchment-skinned old crone, with the shiny, black-stained teeth of other days, was brought in, bowing and smiling and sucking in her

breath. She was doubtless younger than Mrs. Cartwright, but she had the look of incalculable antiquity.

Wiggles shivered a little at the black teeth and general strangeness of manner and costume, but he pulled himself together manfully, and let the old woman on her knees before him pat and handle him lovingly, while she lamented over the death of the young mother, whom she had tended so faithfully, and rejoiced over the sight of the old "masta" and "missus."

"Wiggles, this was our bungalow, where we lived. Here was the old nursery. Your mother's little crib stood right there. All that two-story part has been built since, and everything is quite different,—quite different. Your mother used to play in the garden, with the *amah* to watch her, and I believe this is the very palm that she planted on her five-year-old birthday. Isn't it, Julius? It's grown so, it's hard to say, but it was that kind of a palm, and in that identical spot."

"Wiggles, this is the mother of the little

English girl who was your mother's best friend when we lived here. They never quarrelled but once,—the time they fell to discussing whether the English or the Americans came out ahead in the War of 1812, and then they pulled each other's hair frightfully. Do you remember?"

The mothers laughed together reminiscently.

"Wiggles, that's the little temple your mother ran away from the *amah* to visit. She had us hunting frantically all over the neighborhood for a couple of hours, till we found her there sitting on the floor back of the altar between a couple of Buddhist priests, sharing their midday meal of boiled rice and pickled *daikon*."

They went inside, and the stolid-faced acolyte, who eyed them suspiciously, wondered why the foreign lady threw a silver piece among the copper offerings on the mat in front of the altar.

It grieved Mrs. Cartwright that they could not run up to Tokio, which she had been exceedingly fond of in the old days; but noth-

ing in the world would have induced her to wait over for another steamer, as her husband suggested.

"No, I go with you as far as I can, Julius," she said. "I'd go all the way to Manila if I could, you know. I don't want to go back to Tokio without you, anyhow."

"Oh, I'd be afraid to go there with you if I could," he laughed; "afraid you'd make me visit the graves of the Forty-seven Ronins."

"I certainly would!" she assured him. "I shall never get over wondering at your prosaic nature. Our last day in Tokio,—and you preferred smoking a cigar and taking a nap to making a pilgrimage to the most sacred spot in all Japan!"

"But I was sleepy, my dear madam," he urged, "and I knew you had seen it already. I wasn't depriving *you* of anything."

"Sleepy," she repeated scornfully, "when you might never again have the chance to light a taper and leave a visiting card at a shrine so celebrated in song and story!"

But her scorn was merely humorous. She

had long since accepted her husband's limitations as part of himself, and had even become attached to them. Had he suddenly developed a fondness for sight-seeing equal to her own, it would probably have struck her as incongruous, if not unseemly.

At Kobe, at Nagasaki, and at Shanghai, the experience at Yokohama was repeated. First, the anxiety lest war had been declared and the intense relief that it had not, then the joyful abandonment of themselves to hunting up old friends and old places.

Not that the result of the search was always joyful. They had often to grieve over the modern improvements that were spoiling the old-time picturesqueness. They were deeply distressed when they found the house they had lived in at Nagasaki had been pulled down to make room for a more pretentious structure. But saddest of all, of course, were the human changes. When they saw faces and heard voices that they had not thought of, perhaps, for twenty years, and opened the later chapters of life-stories whose early ones

were familiar to them, they must expect to learn not only of births and marriages, prosperity and happiness, but of failure and misery, of death, and here and there of a catastrophe worse than death. Yet, after all, the demands made on their sympathy were superficial, and the delicate seasoning of melancholy served but to heighten the flavor of this wonderful *pot-pourri* of old associations.

"I wouldn't have missed all these experiences for anything in the world, Julius!" Mrs. Cartwright exclaimed, as the low Yangtse banks dropped out of sight, leaving no sign of the China they had just revisited except the muddy color of the water, defiled by the outpouring of the great foul river.

This was the last stage of their journey. Two days later they had passed Waglan Island and were drawing near to the familiar blue hills of Hong Kong. They threaded their way through Lyemoon Pass, and all at once the harbor opened before them.

Captain Cartwright stood on the bridge, whither the captain of the steamer had in-

vited him, glasses in hand, eagerly scanning the forest of masts toward which they were shaping their course. Mrs. Cartwright and Wiggles were on the deck just below.

"There they are!" Captain Cartwright cried suddenly,—"and, by heaven, they're gray! They've got their war-paint on."

His wife smiled up at him, her eyes full of tears. If he had been beside her, she would have squeezed his hand, but she could not trust herself to speak.

And here was Wiggles tugging at her skirt and looking into her face with kindling eyes.

"Oh, aren't we glad, Gran'mudder, aren't we *glad!*"

CHAPTER XIX

SUE, down on Rivington Street, did not at first believe there was going to be any war. Rivington Street did not greatly concern itself with the outside world. Its own daily battle for enough to eat and drink was altogether too absorbing.

Some of the boys who came to the clubs expressed bloodthirsty sentiments toward dagoes in general and those who blew up the Maine in particular, and grew excited in describing what they would like to do. Sue tried to convince them that revenge as a motive smacked of barbarism, and that if there should be a war, it would be undertaken in defence of the downtrodden Cubans and not to avenge the Maine. It may be doubted whether the boys were convinced, and Sue's own convictions began to waver after one or

two afternoons spent with Mrs. Cartwright, listening to her impassioned denunciations and to the quieter but equally intense views of the Captain.

Then the Duluth, which had been away on a couple of months' cruise, returned to the yard, and Mr. McMasters came down to call. Before she fully realized his intentions, he was conducting a patriotic rally and had the boys singing everything from "Hail Columbia" to the latest adaptation known as "Marching through Cuba." As a result of that evening's work, he carried off to the recruiting office three apprentice boys, two landsmen, and a marine.

Before she knew it Sue found herself swept into the full tide of popular enthusiasm and leading patriotic rallies herself. Mr. McMasters's technical explanations of the evidence before the court of inquiry convinced her that the Maine had been destroyed by an outside agency. And, little by little, she found the virile blood of her pioneer forebears asserting itself against the acquired doctrines of the

barbarism of war and the unworthiness of revenge, until she was passionately convinced that peace could be bought only at the price of national dishonor, and that war, hideous as it was, was the lesser evil of the two.

About this time Barbara came down to New York for spring shopping. Her interest in spring shopping was weak, but the idea was her mother's. She was too late to see the Cartwrights, who had left a fortnight before, but she lost no time in hunting up Sue. Even in the enthusiastic delight of their first meeting Sue could not rid herself of a faint, indefinite impression of aloofness about Barbara. She laid it to the two years that had elapsed since they were together,—an interval only imperfectly bridged by letters,—and assured herself that it would quickly disappear in the renewed intimacy of face-to-face talks. But she was never quite sure that it had done so.

Barbara was one of those who felt that the coming war was a thing of unmingled evil. She had been brought up to a warm admiration for Spain, not only as the most faithful of

nations in a degenerate age, from the standpoint of Catholicism, but on account of its great historical achievements. She was rankly incredulous, not only of the outside destruction of the Maine, but of the cruelties and atrocities reported in the newspapers as practised on the Cubans. Even the senatorial and consular reports on the reconcentration camps could not shake her faith in Spanish humanity.

"If you had only got here before the Captain left, he would have convinced you," Sue told her.

"He would have convinced me that *his* convictions are honest, but I know that already."

"Wait till you've talked to Mr. McMasters a bit."

Barbara shrugged her shoulders.

"Sue, you are navy mad," she asserted. "It's natural enough they should feel as they do. It's their business to fight. They're fine fellows and brave and honest, and I like them almost as well as you do; but they're too much mixed up in it to be good judges of the ethics of the situation."

Sure enough, Mr. McMasters had no more effect on her convictions than Sue had had.

"It's your circulation that's at fault," commented Sue. "If you had a good one, you'd be as belligerent as the rest of us."

"Then I thank God for my poor circulation," Barbara returned with unexpected seriousness.

If Barbara was not in sympathy with the war enthusiasm of her naval friends and of the general public, she was equally unresponsive, even frankly disapproving, toward the work Sue was so much absorbed in at the Settlement.

"You're wrong in your first principles," she said to Sue. "The curse of our age is its so-called humanitarianism. You are all trying to substitute the service of man for the worship of God. You're so busy giving out socks and potatoes that you pay no attention to anybody's soul, — not even your own."

"We don't give out socks and potatoes," protested Sue, but Barbara ignored the interruption.

"Charity is a virtue in its proper place," she continued, "but it can't be substituted for faith, and it ought to be undertaken for the love of God and not for the love of man."

Sue looked at her wistfully.

"There isn't any use in our discussing it, Barbara. We're too far apart. We haven't any common ground to meet on. I don't believe there's a word left in the English language to which we attach the same meaning."

"You're right. Discussions never do any good. I hope you won't mind if I pray for you, though."

This sounded so unlike Barbara that Sue glanced at her quickly to see if she was joking. But her face wore a look of utter seriousness.

"It will be very kind of you, I'm sure," Sue said, with a flicker of amusement in eyes and voice, "but I doubt if it does much good."

"It certainly won't, if you take it in that spirit," Barbara agreed with a sigh.

“What in the world has come over her?” Sue wondered. “I never saw anybody so changed.”

She was not surprised to get a note from Barbara a few days later, saying that she was about to go into retreat for a week at a convent just outside the city.

“Imagine that disembodied spirit fasting and praying when she ought to be making red corpuscles for her blood on a diet of beef juice and egg-nog!” she exclaimed impatiently to Mr. McMasters.

“A week of retreat from the world,—of fasting and prayer in a convent! What a queer relic of mediævalism,” he mused.

“That’s what she and I called the navy once, do you remember?”

“The first time I met you,—that evening at the Cartwrights’. Yes, I remember. But you were badly mistaken. The war spirit belongs to all times.”

“So does the mortification-of-the-flesh spirit, I expect, though it never has such a numerous following.”

"A sort of *succès d'élite*?" he suggested, smiling.

"I won't admit that," she cried. "I have no sympathy with it. It's morbid. It's a sign of sickliness either in mind or body. What could be more beautiful or more wonderful than the human body? How can religious people despise and abuse it? Don't they believe it to be the handiwork of the Almighty? Don't some of them go so far as to say He made it in His own image? Doesn't it seem ungracious, not to say sacrilegious to scorn such a gift? I can't see any holiness in starving one's own highly organized tissues so as to make a breeding place for low and pestilent microbes. Starving one's self is as immoral as overfeeding one's self, and I've no patience with that either."

"Do you suppose she scourges herself with knotted cords and sleeps in a coffin?" he speculated.

"Barbara? Not the coffin part. It's only the Trappists who do that, I believe. But for the scourging, — of course I don't know, —

but I really shouldn't be surprised. — Oh, isn't it dreadful!" she ended with sudden passion.

"It seems so, and yet — why should we object? We all have our favorite ways of getting what somebody called the 'sense of spiritual uplift'; and if that's hers, why I suppose it's a good thing. If she were married and had a family of children, one might question her right to imperil her health, but —"

"I wish she *were* married and had a family of children! It's just what she needs. She wouldn't have time then to be morbid."

Sue was one of the people who speak first and think afterwards. The following thought in this case brought a wave of crimson to her face, as she realized the somewhat unconventional character of what she was saying.

"I don't know," he replied, apparently unconscious of anything unusual in their discussion. "I can't imagine her married. Now *you* —"

He paused, with a certain sense of dawning embarrassment.

"Oh, I can always be relied on to do the

normal and commonplace thing," she returned easily.

"Never commonplace, but divinely normal."

His voice was very low and earnest.

Sue looked at him in blank surprise. She had expected a very different sort of response to her impulsively expressed wish of a moment before. She had long been convinced of his tenderness for Barbara, but evidently he did not wish to confide in her. She sighed and asked him about a concert that he was helping the boys to get up in aid of the Maine victims. The result to the fund might not be large, but the spirit of lending a helping hand was worth encouraging.

A week later Mr. McMasters came around hurriedly to say good-by. The Duluth had been ordered by telegram from Washington to join the newly organized Flying Squadron at Fortress Monroe. They had been taking stores aboard all day and would pull out in the morning.

"Have you seen Barbara?" Sue asked.
"She's come back to life, you know."

"Yes, I have just come from her aunt's, where she is staying now. I expected to see the clouds of the other world still trailing about her, but she seemed just the same as ever; said the same bright, double-edged things, and didn't soar a particle."

"Oh, of course. Barbara doesn't pose."

"Isn't the cynicism itself a pose?"

"No, no. It's the reverse of the medal. It's perfectly genuine. It's part of the morbidness, though. Healthy-minded people aren't cynical."

"What a priestess of nature you are!" he exclaimed. "If Miss Thornhill is a survival of mediæval Latinity, you are all classic and Hellenic."

"Barbara called me a Greek once. But never mind *us*. Let's talk about *you*. It's much more interesting. Think what you may have gone through before we meet again."

"I may have gone through the portals of the next world," he said, half smiling to neutralize the over-seriousness of the thought.

"Oh, don't!" she cried, with a catch in her voice.

"I won't if I can help it," he assured her, smiling broadly this time.

"I mean, don't talk about it. Of course we all know the chance is there, but one doesn't want to talk about it."

"It's good of you to care as much as that," he said gently. "I didn't suppose there was anybody who did — really."

"Oh!" she protested, as if something had hurt her.

"Would you think me presumptuous if I asked you to let me write to you sometimes?"

Sue had recovered herself.

"How can I tell till you ask?" she bantered.

"I am asking now. Tell me."

"Why didn't you ask Barbara?"

"I did," he admitted frankly, "but she turned me down. Said she hated to write letters, and didn't find any special satisfaction in receiving them. She said people always begin to act a part when they take a pen in

their hands—including herself and myself. I couldn't convince her to the contrary."

Sue laughed.

"Then you admit that I am only a second choice?"

"Why, no. I intended to ask you both. There's nothing wrong in that, is there? Is it the custom in California to correspond with only one person at a time?"

"Now you are laughing at me," said Sue, with her ready and always becoming wave of color.

She felt rebuked, for her attitude had seemed to imply sentiment of the monopolizing sort in a request for correspondence, and his words made it very plain that he had meant nothing of the kind.

"I don't agree with Barbara," she said, "though of course letter-writing isn't as satisfactory as talking. I shall be very glad to have you write to me, and you must know how intensely interested I shall be in all you can tell me."

"You'll get the news quicker in the papers."

"The statistics, yes. But it's the little personal things that make it seem real."

"And you will answer my letters?"

"Why, of course."

"Thank you. You have made me very happy."

She glanced at him in surprise. The words seemed out of proportion to the occasion.

"How I envy you!" she exclaimed, changing the subject.

"Yes, I can understand that," he replied. "I believe you'd make a good fighter," he added, smiling.

"Why, I hope so," she returned. "It's disgusting sometimes to be a woman."

"Not when the woman's you," he protested. "Don't talk blasphemy."

"You are going to make history," she went on, ignoring his lapse into compliment.

"Not much, personally. But the navy will."

"You will do your share."

"I shall do my best."

He stood up.

"Must you go?"

He nodded.

"I go on watch at midnight."

"For how long?"

"Till four."

"And you won't have time to take a nap first. You ought not to have come. Or you ought to have gone away earlier."

"Don't you suppose I would rather talk to you than take a nap?" he inquired in an amused tone.

He had gone into the hall, and was putting on his overcoat. Then he picked up his hat, gloves, and cane.

"You know how truly I wish you all the good fortune there is," said Sue, earnestly, — "personal safety first, then the chance to serve the country and the reward of it, — glory by the wagonload, — all there is of it!"

"I should be quite content without the last, and —" he lowered his voice — "if I know myself, without the first."

He spoke hesitatingly, as one more used to hide than to express his emotions.

"I know it," she answered warmly, "but you must have *all*."

He was holding out his hand silently, smiling unsteadily.

She laid hers in it, returning his grasp firmly. Her eyes suddenly grew misty with unshed tears.

"God bless you!" she whispered.

"Thank you," he answered, in a voice barely audible.

Just then one of the other "residents" appeared on the stairway, coming down. The emotion in the air all fled at the instant.

"Don't get sand-bagged on your way to the elevated," Sue called to him cheerfully, as he opened the front door.

"Try not to," he called back. "It would be rather an inglorious wind-up, wouldn't it?"

CHAPTER XX

BEAUTIFUL Hong Kong! The Cartwrights had known it and loved it of old, but it seemed to them lovelier than ever on that April day, as they steamed into the harbor, and gazed their fill at the mellow blue haze that veiled the Hong Kong heights to the left and the Kowloon hills to the right. Between, lay the blue water, giving back a dazzling reflection of the tropical sun, and over all brooded the hot blue sky.

The fleets of many nations lay in the harbor, among which the American squadron looked more distinguished than formidable. A dozen battle ships and cruisers larger than the Olympia, two or three of them more than double her size, completely dwarfed the vessels of the American fleet so far as mere bulk was concerned. With their slim, graceful outlines, they looked like a

group of grayhounds, swift and high-bred, but by no means fierce.

"You've gone in too much for beauty and speed with your ships," said a fellow-passenger, a retired English naval officer, to Captain Cartwright. "They look like yachts. Of course they're natty and all that, but I'm afraid they won't stand the strain of real fighting."

"We shall know more on that subject this time next month," said the Captain, with a quiet smile.

It was the nearest he had ever come in his life to a boast.

Captain Cartwright lost no time in reporting his arrival to the Commodore and taking command of the Portland. Every one congratulated him on his good luck in beating the declaration of war, and every one was glad to see him, except possibly the Portland's first lieutenant, who thereby lost his chance of commanding the ship in action.

Mrs. Cartwright, having established herself ashore at the hotel, spent a considerable part of each day in a canopy-topped chair carried on

the shoulders of a couple of coolies. Sometimes she went to drink tea with such of her friends of twenty years ago as were still above the sod and not returned to the mother country. Oftener she wandered, for the love of it, along Kennedy Road or Bowen Road, enjoying the vistas hundreds of feet down to the town and the harbor, hundreds of feet up to the Peak, framed by a charming tangle of tropical greenery in the foreground.

Wiggles occasionally went with her, looking at this new world serenely, if a trifle condescendingly, from the height of his chair, or giving lordly directions — the freshly acquired “man-man” and “chop-chop” — to his coolies. At other times he went to the public gardens with his small-footed Chinese *amah*, and tormented her by running ahead faster than her poor little pegs of feet could carry her. It seemed to fill him with unholy glee to hear her shrill voice screaming after him.

“Masta Liggie, Masta Liggie, no do so fashion! *Amah* no can catchee. Belong too muchee bad boy.”

Or he would scandalize her by fraternizing with one of the black-whiskered, red-turbaned, six-foot Sikh policemen, who were the object of her special antipathy, as they were of his most fervent admiration.

“What for genteeman son wantchee walkee-walkee talkee-talkee dat piecee Mooloo man?” she would cry with infinite scorn. “No plop fashion. He belong too muchee bad man. He makee cuttee head udder man. He alla same chow-chow udder man.”

Wiggles scoffed at these lurid tales and thrust his hand confidingly into the hand of his friend the Sikh, whose fierce eyes softened as they looked down into the upturned face of the little sailor boy with its halo of yellow curls. Yet the *amah's* imputations of murder and cannibalism, disbelieved as they were, sent delicious creeps down his spine and added a touch of pleasantly horrible mystery to the zest of the acquaintance.

Sometimes the pheasants and the deer and the gorgeous peacock behind their wire nettings would hold him entranced by the hour.

Those were the *amah's* happy moments, when she could sit on a bench and gossip with the other *amahs* and vociferously abuse any person of low degree who presumed to brush against her distinguished charge.

There were mornings when Wiggles was too much absorbed playing Spanish war in his room at the hotel to go out at all. He used all sorts of fleets, — nut-shells in the wash-basin, folded paper boats on the table, or his grandmother's shoes on the floor. But though the construction of the ships and the manner of the fight varied greatly, there was never but one end to these battles, — the complete annihilation of the Spanish squadron.

“For quarter, for quarter, the Spaniard then cried he,” Wiggles would chant, adapting to his purpose an old navy song his grandfather had taught him,

“Blow high, blow low, for so sailed we.

‘Oh, your ship shall be your coffin and your grave
shall be the sea,

Sailing down along the coast of the High Barbaree!’ ”

One afternoon Mrs. Cartwright took a globe-trotting steamer acquaintance to the French convent on the road to Quarry Bay, to buy some of the lace made by the pupils.

While the sister was showing them laces, Mrs. Cartwright grew reminiscent over her visits to the convent twenty years before, and inquired after several nuns she had known then. One of them, she found to her pleasure, had become Mother Superior. The rest were all dead or moved to other stations. Mrs. Cartwright expressed a desire to see the Mother Superior, who received her with the utmost warmth, kissing her on both cheeks. Nothing would do but she must go all over the convent to note the improvements. There had been only twelve girls in the orphan asylum then, there were a hundred and fifty now. And here,—did *Madame* remember? —was an old blind woman, the very same whose skill with her needle *Madame* had marvelled over many years ago. They paused to exchange a few remarks with the old woman. Did *Madame*

recall what a poor little chapel they used to have? She must see the new one and admire the altar-cloth embroidered by their girls, and the statue of the Blesséd Virgin donated by a pupil who had made a wealthy marriage. And here were the dormitories and the washrooms and the kitchen, all so wonderfully enlarged and improved. And after their trip over the convent, *Madame* and her friend must not refuse to come into the Mother Superior's little office and have a sip of wine.

All this, pleasant as it was, delayed them, and it was growing dusk when they got into their chairs and started for home. Had the coolies been willing to keep along the water front, Mrs. Cartwright could not have lost her bearings, but they insisted on turning into a maze of back streets, to her unknown. They spoke no English and she no Chinese. She was familiar enough with the method of guiding one's bearers, — hand dropped sharply on right arm of chair for a turn to the right, on left arm for a turn to the left, on both

arms for a stop. But when she tried thus to guide them back to the *bund*, they shook their heads and pointed in the direction they were going, reiterating many things, no doubt interesting, had they only been intelligible.

"I suppose they are taking a short cut," she said resignedly to her companion. "We may as well let them alone."

"They surely know we want to go back to the hotel?"

"Oh, surely."

But, as they swung along around one corner after another, and the darkness closed in over them, and the look of the red-placarded "licensed lodging-houses" with their swarms of Mongolian inhabitants grew more sordid and forbidding, and still there was no glimpse of Queen's Road or even of the harbor, both women grew distinctly nervous and uncomfortable.

"Oh," cried Mrs. Cartwright, suddenly, with a note of relief in her voice, "there are two of our sailors just ahead. *Now* we're all right."

"Surely," remonstrated the other woman,

“you aren’t going to speak to them? They may have been drinking. They might insult us.”

Mrs. Cartwright was as indignant as though a reflection had been cast on a member of her own family. In a few swift, reproachful words, she informed her companion that the men who wore that uniform were absolutely to be depended on. The other woman looked slightly incredulous, but Mrs. Cartwright did not stop for argument.

“Won’t you come here a minute, please,” she cried, raising her voice sufficiently to reach the sailors, and at the same time thumping vigorously for the coolies to set down her chair.

They lowered it to the ground, and the two sailors came up, surprised, but attentive.

“You’re from one of our ships,” Mrs. Cartwright began. “I’m so glad we’ve met you. We don’t know where we are, and we’re afraid the coolies aren’t taking us right. I’m Mrs. Cartwright. My husband is Captain Cartwright of the Portland.”

“Yes’m. We don’t know the town much ourselves. We’ve never been ashore here

before. But we'll stay by you and see that those pig-tailed heathen don't try any tricks. Where is it you want to go? That big hotel on the broad street near the landing? You aren't heading right for it, sure. It must be down *that way*."

Mrs. Cartwright motioned her bearers to lift up the chair again, and the sailors stationed themselves, one by each lady. They turned the coolies in the direction in which they decided Queen's Road must lie and urged them forward with scant ceremony. The coolies, so wilful with the ladies, obeyed the sailors with alacrity. They had met that sort before.

Mrs. Cartwright entered into an animated conversation with her special escort, who walked along beside her with his hand on the arm of her chair, lest the bearers should try to run away from him. He delighted her soul by telling her that a chum of his on the Idaho had told him Captain Cartwright was the "whitest" man he ever sailed with. Then they discussed the prospective war and the loss of the Maine.

"Those dirty dagoes will wish they'd let the

Maine alone before we're done with 'em," he prophesied. "You can't never trust 'em. I've sailed with 'em. I know 'em, — mean, treacherous, cowardly curs, — that's what they are! They don't fight with their fists like Christians. They whip out a knife on you. And if they can't get hold of a knife, they *bite*. You mayn't believe me, Mrs. Cartwright, but I had one of 'em bite my hand clear to the bone once. I've the scar of it yet. But I wiped up the deck with him a bit. And we're goin' to wipe up hell with the whole nation. Oh, I *beg* your pardon," he broke off with sudden confusion. "It slipped out before I thought."

Mrs. Cartwright absolved him.

"You don't think it's possible, Mrs. Cartwright," he pleaded, looking into her eyes like an earnest child, "that there won't be no war after all? You don't think they'll patch it up somehow there in Washington? Take the independence of Cuba, or a bit of an indemnity, or some nice-soundin' apology or other, and call it square?"

"I don't believe it's possible," she said.

"We couldn't take money or land or words in exchange for the murder of our men."

"That's right," he returned tensely. "It's got to be blood, ain't it? But some of the boys are afraid they don't feel that way in Washington. If I thought they'd juggle us out of this fight, I'd be almost tempted" — he lowered his voice — "to shake the service."

"Oh, no," she cried, horror-struck, "not *that*! I understand how you feel, though. I feel that way, too. But I do believe the war is coming — as surely as the sun will rise to-morrow!"

"It can't come too soon for us," he said grimly.

At this moment they turned suddenly into Queen's Road, brightly lighted, full of chairs, 'rikshas, and foot passengers.

"Now we are all right," exclaimed Mrs. Cartwright, "and we mustn't keep you any longer. We are very, very much obliged for your escort."

"We'll see you all the way to the hotel, if you don't mind, Mrs. Cartwright," said the

man beside her. "You can't trust these Chinks. Can't tell what they're up to. They're a good deal like dagoes, I guess."

"But we are taking you very much out of your way."

"That's all right. We were just prospectin'. One way's as good as another to us. It must be pretty hard for a lady like you, though, having to live around in such heathen places as this."

"Weren't they charming?" cried the globe-trotting lady, when they had parted from their body-guard at the door of the hotel. "But surely they aren't all like that?"

"Oh, yes they are," said Mrs. Cartwright, confidently.

The next day the Baltimore came in, and those who knew how short of ammunition the fleet had been, breathed a long sigh of relief.

How they missed the newspapers! The silence was like that of the grave, broken only by a ten-word Reuter telegram now and then, giving the barest skeletons of facts,—no details, no explanations.

Momentous events were crowding on each other's heels. All American residents had been withdrawn from Cuba for fear of a massacre. That might mean much or little. The President had sent a message to Congress, asking for authority to use the army and navy to end the war in Cuba. Was it granted or not? The telegrams gave no hint. The Spanish minister at Washington had asked for his passports. The President was preparing an ultimatum. What became of it? Nothing more was said. But there followed the departure of the American minister from Madrid, the sailing of the North Atlantic fleet for Havana (surely that must mean war!), the President's proclamation of the Cuban blockade, the President's call for a hundred and twenty-five thousand volunteers, and then, at last, after all those incredibly long-drawn-out days, tense with expectation, war was declared, the fleet received its orders, and the Governor, under instructions from London, issued his proclamation of neutrality.

It was all hurried at the last, — mercifully

so. Farewells were brief, unspeakably solemn, but with no tears shed,—not by the Cartwrights, at all events.

From the balcony of a friend's house on the hillside, whither they had been carried off to spend a few days, Wiggles and his grandmother watched the sailing of the ships with swelling hearts.

“Listen, Gran'mudder! It's the band on the Olympia. They're playing 'Star-spangled Banner.' Can't you hear it? Sing, Gran'mudder! Oh, let's us sing, too!”

Her voice faltered at first, but it caught courage from the childish treble beside her, and rang out strong and brave.

“Oh, Gran'mudder,” cried the boy, as they finished the last words, throwing his arms around her neck and hugging her convulsively, “don't you wish we could go along and fight the Spaniards, too!”

CHAPTER XXI

THE fleet did not sail immediately for the Philippines, but awaited, close at hand in Mirs Bay, the arrival of the consul from Manila. He was expected at any moment, and it was thought he might bring important information concerning the defences of the city, the mining of the harbor, and the whereabouts of the Spanish squadron.

Mirs Bay was at that time Chinese territory and not affected by British proclamations of neutrality. They spent two uncomfortable days and nights there, with tightly strained nerves, keeping a vigilant lookout for possible attack by the Spanish fleet or by improvised torpedo boats.

At last a tug was sighted, which proved to have the consul on board. A consultation of commanding officers was held on the flag-

ship, the consul was put aboard the Baltimore as a passenger, the mail was sent over to the tug, — with what a mass of farewells to wives and mothers and sweethearts, who shall say? — and at two o'clock on the afternoon of the 27th of April, the squadron steamed out to sea, with the fighters in single file and the baggage vans on the flank.

All through the fleet ran a tremor of exultation. For more than two months, officers and men had been waiting in cumulative suspense, eager to be doing, but condemned to inaction, haunted ever by the American dread that after having been surprised into heroic sentiment, nothing would come of it.

We don't mind showing emotion on great occasions, but if we show it on an occasion which turns out not to be great after all, we feel eternally disgraced. If a war scare materializes into a war, our effervescence is praiseworthy patriotism, but if the war scare blows over, we laugh sheepishly and try to pretend that we never waved our hats and shouted. Latin races find a great emotion admirable

in and for itself. Our attitude seems to be that it is pardonable only when it accompanies heroic action.

The flag-ship's band was playing stirring martial music. Every one was on deck, but there was not much talking. Each man was busy with his own thoughts.

The land sank out of sight, and the sea and sky divided the universe between them. The throbbing engines were driving them into the warm blue South to seek their fate. What would it be? — defeat or victory? — life or death? There was no middle ground. It must be all or nothing. They had no port of refuge within seven thousand miles. Defeat meant destruction. Repulse meant it almost equally. There could be no waiting to choose the best time, no calm blockading. Their supply of coal, their supply of provisions, and their supply of ammunition were strictly limited; and if they could not capture more before these were exhausted, — they were lost.

These facts were well known to everybody

in the fleet, but the knowledge only clinched their teeth tighter at the thought of the coming struggle.

Toward evening, as the twilight fell, bringing its inevitable tinge of melancholy, thoughts turned toward home and eyes grew tender over images of women and children. Captain Cartwright noted the changing mood with a certain disapproval.

"It's the way to feel for writing sonnets, but not for going into battle. See if you can't shake them out of it," he said to the officer of the deck. "Send for that musical pair of marines. Tell them to go up forward and play — nothing sentimental, something with a swing to it. Try to start the men singing."

The spirited twanging of the banjo and guitar supplied just what was needed. At the first chords of "There'll be a hot time in the old town to-night," the men caught up the air and sang themselves into active enthusiasm again. Every evening thereafter on the way over, the musicians were called for, and the southern seas were introduced to a

singular medley of hand-organ airs and national anthems.

The first morning out, after quarters, in obedience to a signal from the flag-ship, the proclamation of the Governor-general of the Philippines, brought over by the consul, was read aloud to the ship's company.

The officers had read and discussed this incredible document the night before over the wardroom table, but the crew were hearing its extraordinary statements and epithets for the first time, and their faces were a study. It was a curious bit of spiritual discipline to stand there at attention, alert, intelligent, self-respecting, patriotic and American to the finger-tips, and hear that "The North American people, constituted of all the social excrescences, have exhausted our patience and provoked war with their perfidious machinations, with their acts of treachery, with their outrages against the law of nations and international conventions." Sentence rolled upon sentence, each crammed with vituperation, till the abuse became personal and they heard themselves

described as "A squadron manned by foreigners, possessing neither instruction nor discipline," whose "ruffianly intention" was to wipe out the Catholic religion in the Philippines, kidnap the male inhabitants "to be exploited in agricultural or industrial labor," and "gratify their lustful passions at the cost of" the wives and daughters of the community. All of which, this worthy and well-informed hidalgo summed up exclamatorily as "Vain designs! Ridiculous boastings!"

After the last *viva España* and the date and signature, there was a moment of perfect silence. The officer who read the proclamation made no comments. The men who listened to it were positively embarrassed, like a family of well-brought-up children who are assailed for the first time by a volley of billingsgate. Captain Cartwright watched their faces flush and pale as the enormity of the insult slowly pierced their consciousness. He saw bewilderment giving place to indignation. Then he stepped forward and spoke to them.

"You see the opinion they have of us over there." His words cut sharply. "I think we shall be able to change it. And when they find how greatly they have wronged *us*, I hope they will understand that they have wronged the country which sent us."

The men broke into a perfect tumult of cheering, and the Captain noted with satisfaction that the flood of awakening resentment had been successfully turned into the channel of high resolve.

The Captain spent his spare time, after writing his daily letter to his wife, in reading up on the history and topography of the Philippines. He had never visited the islands before, and, indeed, hardly a man in the fleet knew anything of the archipelago at first hand.

Very early on the morning of the 30th, the enemy's country was sighted at Cape Bolinao, and three of the ships were detached and sent ahead to reconnoiter Subig Bay, where it was thought the Spanish fleet might be waiting for them.

Meantime the order was signalled "Clear ship for action." They had been doing it all their lives in play, but this was the first time any of them, except the half-dozen veterans of the Civil War, had seen it done in earnest. Boxes, chests and barrels, paint, oil, all inflammable things, always marked "overboard" and always before carefully restored to place when the drill was over, were now given the sea toss, till the water was covered with wreckage as far as the eye could reach, and a passing ship might readily imagine the battle had already been fought and lost.

The scouts came back, reporting that the enemy's fleet was not in Subig Bay. Then followed a conference of commanding officers aboard the flag-ship. Captain Cartwright returned, serenely jubilant.

"Thank God, there's to be no dawdling," he confided to the executive officer. "We are going in to-night."

"Over the submarine mines we have heard so much about?"

"Very likely they haven't been put in place yet. You know these *mañana* people. Anyhow, we must take our chances."

"Who goes first?"

"The flag-ship."

"If anything should happen to the flag-ship, — the Commodore and fleet captain, that is, — you would be —"

"Senior officer present."

"You had thought of it?"

"I had thought of it. But I am not expecting it."

"What would you do?"

"Go on in and finish the fight. What else? But, Selby, suppose we don't speculate any further. We'll meet emergencies when we get to them. Too much imagination the night before a battle is a bad thing. The power to sleep well is better than the power to think well just now."

He was sitting on the poop with a cigar. His legs were crossed, his cap was perched on his knee, and he was blowing smoke rings into the air with quiet enjoyment. Of course

the thought passed through his mind that it might be the last cigar he would ever smoke, —indeed, he had treated himself to an extra good one out of deference to it, —but nothing would have induced him to give utterance to such an idea. Many things are foolish to say, which are by no means foolish to think.

This time to-morrow it would all be settled. If he was destined to pass over the divide, he would find the answer of the question that had tormented him for years, the mystery of life and death, the riddle of the great Beyond. It would be either nothing or something. If nothing, then at least no suffering. If something, then Elizabeth would be there too. Dear Elizabeth, he could imagine her coming to meet him! And there was his mother, who had died when he was a child, whose image he had enshrined and cherished in his lonely boyhood till it had acquired a sacredness altogether unearthly. There could be no regret in dying if he was to meet those two. Then he thought of Wiggles and of

his wife. He had no feeling of being essential to the world. He was a modest man and a philosopher. He knew there were others who would take up his work and do it worthily,—as worthily as he, no doubt. Even Wiggles, though his heart yearned over the budding life, would not greatly miss him. His grandmother would bring him up to be an officer and a gentleman. But the grandmother— Ah, there was the one who needed him! They had been together too long to learn to live apart. And Elizabeth was gone. He was the only one. He must stay with her if he could.

“But she will not grudge the gift of my life, if it is needful,” he reflected, and the consciousness of her courage uplifted him again. “What a drag on a man’s resolve it must be to have a woman clinging to him who will not understand,” he thought compassionately.

Suddenly he stood up and tossed the cigar stump overboard.

“Have that general-court-martial prisoner

brought to the mast," he said to the officer of the deck.

"Ay, ay, sir," replied the young man, saluting, but silently wondering.

The Captain climbed down the ladder from the poop and approached the mainmast, where a marine was leading a handcuffed man, with the haggard eyes and unkempt beard of long days of confinement.

"Take the handcuffs off," said the Captain.

The man brought his forefinger to his forehead perfunctorily.

"Murphy," said the Captain, with the curious blending of sternness and kindness in his voice that gave it its distinctive character, "we are going into Manila Bay to-night. We expect to meet the Spanish fleet early in the morning. You are an American like the rest of us. I have no power to remit your sentence, as you know, but I am going to make you a prisoner at large and let you have your share in the fight."

The man, who had stood rather slouchily at first, seemed to gain two inches in height

as he drew himself up to erectness, and his eyes for the first time met the Captain's with their newly recovered self-respect.

"Thank you, sir," he said simply, saluting again.

"That was a fine thing to do, sir," exclaimed the officer of the deck, as they walked aft together.

"Why, no," returned the Captain, smiling, "it was merely a rough attempt at justice. He deserved his three months' imprisonment of course. But to be kept out of the fight to-morrow in addition, would make a punishment altogether disproportionate to his offence. The court had no such thing as that in mind. I did the best I could to restore the balance."

He went into the cabin and wrote a few lines to his wife. He was at no time a voluminous writer. Then he stood in front of the bookcase and took down one volume of the poets after another, turning the familiar leaves and pausing to read a few stanzas here and there, favorites of his younger days for the most part, — Burns and Keats and

Shelley. Last of all, he opened Longfellow's "Christus" at the Finale, the wonderful monologue of Saint John.

"The clashing of creeds, and the strife
Of the many beliefs, that in vain
Perplex man's heart and brain,
Are naught but the rustle of leaves,
When the breath of God upheaves
The boughs of the Tree of Life,
And they subside again."

The lines gave him, as they had always done, a vision of the Infinite. It was as though a door opened in his soul's prison-house and let him gaze, free for a moment from the bondage of Self, into the immensities of Time and Space.

The swift moment of exaltation passed, but left him with a fine serenity.

"Call me at four bells," he said to the orderly, and lying down on his bunk without undressing, was soon sleeping as soundly as a child.

CHAPTER XXII

AT ten o'clock, when the Captain appeared on deck again, refreshed from his nap, he found a beautiful moonlight night, almost too clear for the purpose, though cloud masses, floating here and there, gave promise of the needed obscurity.

It was so clear that he could see the dark hulls of the other ships. No lights showed but the guiding light of the vessel immediately ahead, carefully shaded from every direction except astern. Such lights as were absolutely necessary in the interior of the ships were veiled from the outside. The silence throughout the squadron was broken only by the throbbing of the engines and the lapping of the water. It might have been a procession of nautical phantoms.

The high coast of Luzon showed in a

shadowy fashion to the left. The entrance of the bay was only a few miles distant.

The powder magazines were opened, extra charges for the guns brought up on deck, and the crew called to quarters. Then the clouds swept over the face of the moon, and they headed for the bay.

They chose the wider entrance, as less likely to be thoroughly protected by mines. This was a time far more trying to men's nerves than the battle of the next morning. The darkness, the silence, the inactivity, while they waited for a submarine explosion that should hurl them into eternity, were far harder to bear than the roar and tumult and strenuous exertion of the fight.

Beside the danger of mines, there were the dangers of navigation. They had no pilot, of course, and none of the navigating officers had ever been in the bay before. Lighthouses had been extinguished at the declaration of war, leaving them dependent on soundings and Spanish charts notoriously inaccurate. If any of the vessels struck a

rock or grounded on a shoal, the dawning day would leave them completely at the mercy of the forts.

But the God of battles was with them.

To the left, rose the frowning heights of Corregidor; to the right was the gun-capped rock, El Fraile. One by one the ships passed the danger zone undiscovered, till all the fighters were inside the bay. Then, just as the tension was relaxing and every one beginning to breathe freely again, a great shower of sparks shot up from the smoke-stack of the McCulloch.

There was a moment of breathless waiting. Would a rain of shot pour down on them? Would mines and torpedoes be exploded under them?

A rocket went up from Corregidor, and a shot rang out from El Fraile. It was answered by one or two of the last vessels of the fleet, and then silence again enveloped them. The transports passed through unmolested,—why, no one knows,—and the squadron was safe for the moment in the open bay.

The men who were not on watch were allowed to lie down on the deck and sleep beside their guns. A sharp lookout was kept for torpedo boats, but none appeared.

At daybreak they swept up to Manila, with battle flags flying from every masthead, looking for the Spanish fleet. But the masts and spars that had lured them on were found to belong to merchantmen, and they turned, following the shore, till the hostile squadron came into view off the navy yard at Cavite.

In the histories of us all, even the most humdrum, there are certain supreme moments when life is concentrated to its very essence, — mountain peaks of experience where markers are set up for the reckoning of dates backward and forward. A mere five minutes at one of these crucial times may color all the rest of one's life for weal or woe. The first of May, 1898, was probably the loftiest of these peaks in the lives of all the Americans at Manila that day. It was also a peak of no mean height in the history of the nation.

In an advanced stage of civilization, it is

only occasionally that the great primitive fighting instinct of our ancestors gets possession of us. When it does, it sweeps us off our feet.

The men of the American squadron that Sunday morning in Manila Bay were not philosophizing about the making of history. The mighty present wiped out past and future. They were uplifted by the gray, wordless Northern ecstasy of battle. The bulldog in them closed his relentless jaws upon the enemy. It was "Pound, pound, pound!—Don't wait to be pounded!—At them again! Don't give them time to hit back." The recollection of the Maine's destruction aroused the fury of fighting in them; and years of discipline converted this abounding force of blind rage into a deliberate, carefully directed, far deadlier energy of attack.

The Spanish shot screamed overhead or splashed in the water, falling short of the mark.

Through the minds of officers and men, pulsed hot, half-articulate thoughts.

“Why can’t those fellows hit? Bad marksmanship or bad powder? Both, probably. They’ll strike pretty soon, though; knock us out, maybe; but in the meantime we’ll give ’em hell!”

Clouds of smoke settled down and shut out the contending squadrons from each other’s sight, but there was always the flash of the guns to aim at. The Spaniards’ fire grew wilder and more irregular. But they showed no other sign of having been injured. A shell passed through the rigging of the Portland, cutting it in several places. Another embedded itself in the sternpost, but failed to explode. A third passed clear through the steam-launch, shattering it completely, but doing no other damage.

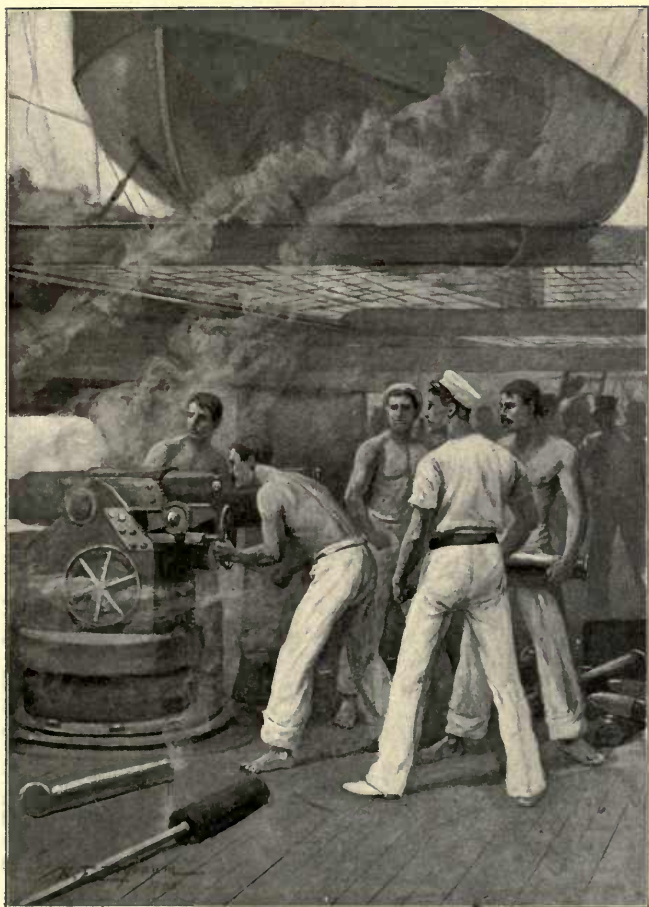
The unformulated thoughts throbbed on.

“What, no one hurt yet? That’s good. But we mustn’t expect it to last. There’ll be blood enough flowing presently, no doubt, but we shan’t stop for it,—not even if it’s our own.”

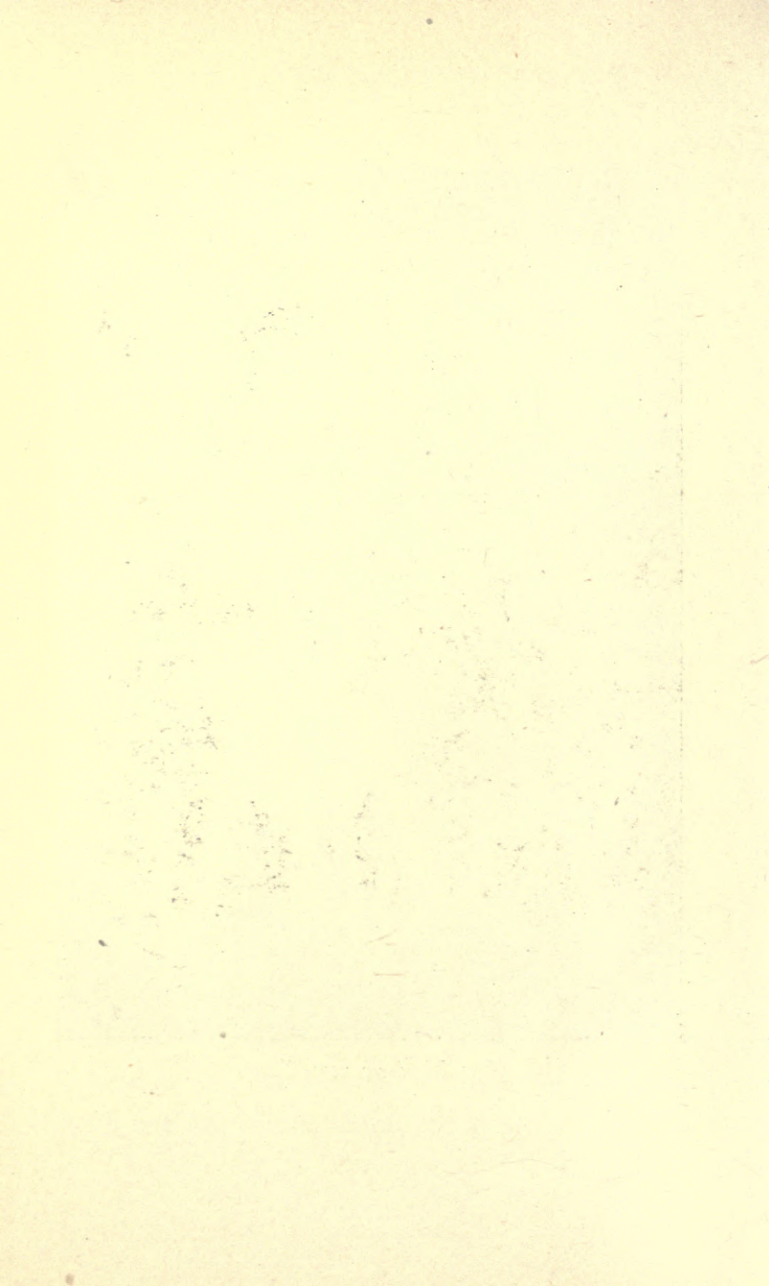
Barefoot, naked to the waist, blackened

with powder through which the coursing sweat made erratic streaks, the men at the guns looked like incarnate demons of battle. Here and there a pair of shoes and a gauze undershirt among these grimy figures marked an officer. Captain Cartwright, who was always punctilious about dress, added a once-white blouse to the outfit, and tied a silk handkerchief around his neck in place of a collar.

The heat was awful. At Hong Kong it had not been uncomfortably warm, and on the trip over, though the temperature had increased, they had had steady breezes and little to do. But here they were, suddenly hurled into a land-locked furnace, working like madmen, with the tropical sun blazing down on their unprotected heads. At an ordinary time there would have been scores of heat prostrations, but the excitement of the battle carried them through unscathed. In the dynamo room the thermometer stood at 175° Fahrenheit; yet, though the men had to come up from time to time for air, the dynamo was kept running and no one was incapacitated for duty.



THE MEN AT THE GUNS.



Throughout the action, the protected conning tower was empty. The Captain preferred to stand out on the bridge. His eyes, the only centers of emotion in his impassive figure, were blazing with the light of battle. All his activities of mind seemed quickened. He watched the signals from the flag-ship, the movements of the squadron, every act of the enemy, and especially the fall of his own projectiles. Nothing escaped him. Now and again his voice rang out, praising a well-aimed shot or giving a bit of advice as to the sighting of a gun.

When they had thundered away for a couple of hours, passing in front of the enemy's fleet and forts five times, the flag-ship signalled to withdraw from action.

A chill fell on all their hearts. What did it mean? Were the other ships too seriously crippled to go on? Had they used up all their ammunition? Was the Commodore giving up the fight? Fists clinched and the muscles of the throat tightened. Eyes grew suddenly gloomy. The Captain felt it like the

rest. He knew no more than they what the move portended ; but for the sake of the others, he assumed a cheerfulness he did not feel.

“We’ll go back and finish them up after breakfast,” he sang out to the men on deck, and they responded with a rousing cheer.

They had hardly turned away from Cavite when tongues of flame appeared amid the smoke that enveloped the Spanish squadron, and as the smoke drifted skyward, the flag-ship *Reina Cristina* was seen to be on fire. Loud cheering rang through the American fleet at this sight, and was renewed when another Spanish vessel, the *Castilla*, was presently seen to be burning furiously.

“Let the people go to breakfast,” was the first signal from the flag-ship.

Was this really what they had withdrawn for? Twenty minutes for refreshments in the middle of a battle appealed to the grim American sense of humor, and a splutter of amusement ran through the ship’s company. Here and there an impatient soul grumbled: “Oh, to hell with breakfast! Let’s finish up the

dagoes first." But they had had nothing except a cup of coffee since five o'clock the afternoon before, and they had been working furiously. As soon as the strain was relaxed, they became aware of an exceeding hunger, amounting fairly to faintness.

"Commanding officers repair aboard flagship," was the next signal.

They wondered what was the cause of the wild cheering aboard the *Olympia*, and watched eagerly for the return of the Captain's gig. As it came alongside, the officers gathered at the gangway and the men crowded to the bulwarks. Bursting with impatience, they scanned the "old man's" face. There was a buoyant look about it that augured well. With what seemed to them maddening deliberation, he climbed the ladder, uttered the routine "Returned aboard, sir," and responded to the salute of his officers. Then his face broke suddenly into smiles and his voice trembled as he said,—

"There's not a man hurt in the whole fleet!"

A messenger boy, who had edged up near

the group of officers in the hope of hearing something, turned and ran forward, waving his arms like a windmill and shouting at the top of his lungs:—

“Not a man hurt in the whole fleet! Not a man hurt in the whole fleet!”

A great cheer went up from the deck. Tears sprang to men's eyes and thanksgivings trembled in their hearts. The day of miracles had returned, and they were chosen of the Lord, held safe in the hollow of His hand.

The Captain told the men the news himself with a little more detail and assured them, on the word of the Commodore, that they were going back in a few minutes to finish the fight. When he dismissed them they danced about like schoolboys, slapped one another on the back, wrung one another's hands, tossed up their caps, and shouted till their throats were raw.

The celebration stopped abruptly, as a signal fluttered from the flag-ship's halyards. The mellow notes of the bugle called to quarters, and they stood away again for the enemy.

It was closer in this time and harder hammering than ever, short, sharp, and decisive. The *Reina Cristina* and the *Castilla* sank in flames. The powder magazine of the *Don Juan de Austria* exploded, and ship and men disappeared in a volcano of fire. The *Don Antonio de Ulloa* went down heroically, with flag nailed to the mast and impotent guns firing to the end. One after another, the remaining gunboats were sunk or burned and the batteries silenced. At last the red and yellow flag of Spain, hanging limp above the arsenal, was hauled down, and the battle was over.

The Spanish fleet was destroyed, the Pacific coast was made secure, the *Maine* was avenged, and an empire had been lost and won.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE hardest battles are those fought by the non-combatants. They have none of the joy of action and all the terror of suspense.

Mrs. Cartwright, who was both a philosopher and a patriot, far from going out to meet trouble, resolutely turned her back on it and, so far as might be, refused to contemplate it as possible. "Time enough to cross our bridges when we get to them," she said often and thought oftener. And so, again, there were some who misread her determined cheerfulness and called it indifference. But they only saw her with her armor on. There were times, above all in the evening after Wiggles was asleep, when phantoms of disaster haunted her, and hideous possibilities with personal applications made her teeth fairly chatter with fear.

When the rumors began circulating in Hong Kong, she absolutely refused to take anything seriously in advance of the American official reports. Yet in spite of her brave words, she could not but be disquieted over the confident announcement that two American vessels had been blown up and the American fleet repulsed. Finally, bit by bit, the unwilling Spanish telegrams conceded that their fleet had been annihilated and no American ships lost.

This was glorious news, but did not assuage personal anxieties. There were references to the large number of Spanish killed and wounded, but no hint as to the extent of American casualties, except the unpleasantly suggestive phrase that the fleet withdrew in the middle of the action to bury its dead. Then cable communication was broken off, and as the days dragged past without a word, the strain of suspense grew harder and harder to bear. The tentative rejoicing of a woman over a great victory which may have plunged her into deepest mourning, is as painful a complexus of emotions as one often meets.

There was quite a colony of officers' wives in Hong Kong, fifteen or more, of varying types, — excitable young things still wearing their trousseaus, pessimistic matrons who consistently expected the worst, and nervous creatures who paced the floor all night wringing their hands. Among these weaker sisters, Mrs. Cartwright passed to and fro dispensing confidence, joking and scolding a great deal, sympathizing a very little, suggesting pleasant possibilities, and laughing down all auguries of evil.

At last the blessed day came that brought the McCulloch into the harbor with news of every one's safety, and letters for all the wives.

The colony met in one another's rooms and rejoiced hysterically. But Mrs. Cartwright stole off with Wiggles to a secluded spot she knew of under a big banyan tree in the Public Gardens, where she could read her letters over and over and wipe away the tears of thankfulness that brimmed her eyes, without any one's seeing her. For Wiggles was building a fort and did not notice,

When she went back after a couple of hours, she had herself well in hand and was ready to compare notes and rejoice in unison.

"Think what we're missing by not being at home to-day!" she exclaimed. "Just imagine the enthusiasm! How the crowds are thronging in front of the newspaper offices and cheering over every fresh bulletin! The boys are shouting extras, and the flags are waving, and the people are going wild. And here,—what does anybody care but us? Our friends will congratulate us politely. The others are mildly interested in the day's news,—but it's just news. They don't really *care*."

"I don't notice you going home though," somebody suggested, with a smile.

"Going home? With my husband at Manila? Not quite. We must get along as best we can without any enthusiasm except our own. But it's an awful loss. I shan't ever quite get over it."

A few days later, Mrs. Cartwright moved up to the Peak to get Wiggles out of the

steaming heat of the lower levels. He had lost his beautiful rosy color and was white like the rest of the children, but otherwise he was perfectly well. To be sure, his grandmother hovered over him night and day, and never relaxed her vigilance.

The months that followed were trying months. It was impossible to count on anything. There was the constant expectation that the fleet would leave Manila and sail for home. No one dreamed at first that the city would be occupied by our forces. When it was announced that troops would be sent out for that purpose, it was supposed that as soon as they arrived, there would be no further need for most of the ships. But about that time the Camara scare was started, and it became necessary to keep the fleet together to fight another Spanish squadron. And there was the German complication, and the delay in taking Manila.

The lack of full and comprehensible war news from America was a source of much distress to Mrs. Cartwright, who roundly

abused the want of enterprise shown by the colonial press and the meagerness and unreliability of the telegrams. They had a way of announcing that such and such an American ship had been captured by the Spaniards, or that the American attack on such and such a Cuban town had been repulsed with heavy loss ; and as contradictions were not considered interesting enough to cable, there would be no means of knowing it was a mere canard till the newspapers came by mail a month later. Their sense of proportion was, moreover, according to Mrs. Cartwright, singularly deficient.

“They devote more space to the Duke of York’s having a cold in his head,” she exclaimed, indignantly, “than to the battle of Santiago !”

When one is at the antipodes, letters from home assume a value altogether artificial, and Mrs. Cartwright watched the arrival of the mail steamers from San Francisco with only less eagerness than that of the despatch boats from Manila. Two letters which she received

about this time interested her very greatly, though they filled her with widely different feelings. They were from Barbara and Sue, both warmly congratulating her on her husband's safety, on the thanks of Congress he had received in common with the rest of the fleet, and on the indefinite honors that were doubtless in store for him. But here their similarity ended. Barbara, while she refrained from saying all she felt about the iniquity of the war, out of deference to Mrs. Cartwright's well-known sentiments, could not altogether conceal her distress over the course being pursued by "our unhappy country."

"More and more," she wrote, "do I find myself out of tune with a society so given over to the pride of conquest and the lust of revenge. It always seemed frivolous and foolish and tiresome enough, but now it is positively hateful. Should you be very much surprised if I withdrew from it altogether, and if you found me, on your return, in the white robe of a novice? Stranger things have happened."

“Stranger fiddlesticks!” exclaimed Mrs. Cartwright, irreverently. “Stuff and nonsense! White robe of a novice, indeed! If she wants to sacrifice herself, why doesn’t she brace up and do something useful that will help other people? Why can’t she nurse sick soldiers, like Sue? I’ve no patience with such a notion. I hope it’s all talk, but Barbara’s such an odd girl — in spots — that I can’t feel sure.”

Sue was, indeed, nursing sick soldiers with all the enthusiasm of her enthusiastic nature; but she was not doing it on enthusiasm alone. Among the various forms of activity to which she had turned her hand, she had once, soon after leaving college, taken a course in nursing, and her training-school diploma enabled her to be enrolled in the newly organized corps of army nurses. The doctor and head nurses had looked a little askance at her, fearing the dilettante, but Sue soon established her right to be regarded as a serious worker. The old knack and knowledge of the hospital, rusty from disuse, speedily came back to her, and she had many qualifications which admi-

rably fitted her for her new vocation. Not least among these was the discipline that comes from mental training. In spite of the popular impression to the contrary, a college education, properly received, does help a man to dig ditches and a woman to make beds better than they would have done without it. She had, to a remarkable degree, the adaptability to new conditions which is supposed to be characteristic of all Americans. She had a magnificent physique, thanks to which she was able to endure continuous and very wearing labor without feeling any ill effects. Her charm of person and manner gave her unlimited power over refractory patients, while her perfect dignity effectually checked the sentimentalities of convalescents.

Amid her manifold duties at a typhoid fever camp, she did not have much time for writing letters, she said, but she *had* to express her congratulations to Mrs. Cartwright about the dear Captain and tell her in just a few words what she was doing. And then, at the last, came a single, significant, apparently unrelated

little phrase, — “I wish you would tell me your honest opinion of second marriages.”

“Bless her heart,” reflected Mrs. Cartwright, “what shall I say to the child? Of course my words of wisdom won’t really make any difference. But I’ve got to say *something*. What’s the good of a general opinion about a question like that? It doesn’t amount to anything. Now to be personal, — if I were to die and Julius made an old fool of himself and married some young girl, I’d haunt him. Wouldn’t I though! And if Jim Whittemore, after having had the privilege of being Elizabeth’s husband, were to take it into his head to marry somebody else, I’d hate him most cordially to my dying day. But I don’t want to say that to Sue. . . . On the other hand, it would be a little bald to tell her that there are few things in this world which would so delight me as for her to marry John McMasters, — and yet it has the double advantage of being the truth and exactly what she wants to hear!”

CHAPTER XXIV

AFTER the peace protocol was signed, the Duluth came north. And as the Chickamauga typhoid epidemic was a thing of the past and Sue had been transferred to Camp Wyckoff at Montauk Point, Mr. McMasters was able to see her almost immediately.

"You must give this up," he said sternly. "It's killing you."

In fact, she was beginning to look pale and fagged.

"No, it isn't," she replied cheerfully. "And what if it were? It's my work. I didn't try to keep you away from Spanish bullets when your duty called you to face them, did I?"

It was significant that they should assume so much responsibility for each other. Their

correspondence 'had evidently been of a progressive nature.

"But the war is over now," he pleaded.

"Its consequences are not over," she replied, with a comprehensive gesture toward the tents where the sick and wounded lay.

"You have done more than your share already. It is time to think of yourself."

"Look here, John McMasters," she said, with intense earnestness, "I don't believe in a double standard of morality for men and women, and neither do I believe in a double standard of honor for them. I undertook to serve the commonweal just as seriously as you did, and I propose to keep on doing it till I am mustered out."

"By George!" he said, "you ought to be a naval officer! You've the spirit of the service to perfection."

They both smiled at the frank conceit—caste conceit, if not personal—of the remark.

"Unfortunately, I can't be," she replied, with an odd little smile. "I would if I could."

"You might be a naval officer's wife," he suggested in a very low voice, his eyes fixed on the hole he was poking in the ground with his cane.

She rose from the empty vinegar keg on which she had been sitting.

"I might be," she said gently, "if—"

"If what?" he demanded, looking up at her quickly.

"If the ideal man I have been waiting for should ask me."

"Oh!" he breathed, with a little choke. His eyes were like a hurt child's.

He had misunderstood her, but in the nature of things, she could hardly explain his mistake to him.

"I go on duty now," she said. "I've got to leave you. When can you come again?"

"This is a mighty sudden way to shake a fellow," he remarked, summoning a smile with an effort. "I'll be back to-morrow, with your permission, if you'll be good enough to tell me of a more propitious hour."

"Can't you take off those emblems of your high calling and come for a walk with me—out of sight of all this?" he asked her next day on arriving.

She raised both hands to the little muslin cap on her head, then held out her white apron daintily between thumb and finger.

"Do they worry you,—these things?" she laughed at him. "I thought them rather becoming," she added demurely.

"They are," he agreed, "like everything you wear. But they're not appropriate. You ought to be robed always in a stiff brocade with a court train."

She made him a curtsy, then became suddenly businesslike.

"I've only got two hours off duty, and fifteen minutes are gone already. Don't you think it would be rather a waste to spend any of the remaining hour and three quarters in shifting costumes back and forth? I'll do it if you say so," she added with absurd meekness, looking at him from the corners of her eyes.

"No indeed," he cried with vehemence. "I

didn't think of that. The minutes are far too precious. Come down on the beach. Around that point, perhaps, we can get out of sight of all these hospital appliances. You must want to get away from them *sometimes*?"

"Do you find them depressing?" she asked him serenely. "You'd soon get over that. But we'll go down on the beach by all means."

They walked together along the firm damp sand toward the lighthouse, till they had left the last of the tents behind them and were alone with the curling waves, the wingéd clouds, and the great sand dunes tufted with coarse grass.

"Who would have thought that night at the Cartwrights's dinner, when I met you two girls in pretty evening gowns, that I'd ever see one of you dressed as an army nurse and the other as a nun!"

"Oh," she cried, ignoring her own share of the remark, "poor Barbara! Isn't it dreadful? But she *likes* it. She revels in it. Of course she hasn't taken the vows yet. She can give it up if she wants to. But she won't, she won't, — unless *you* can induce her to?"

"*I!*" he exclaimed, in obvious astonishment. "What in the world should she care for *my* views? Besides, I'm inclined to think it's just the life she's suited for. A coif and bandeau will harmonize perfectly with that seraphic face of hers."

"You take it very coolly," said Sue. "Are you all over it then?"

"Over *what?*"

His evident bewilderment bewildered her in turn. She had recourse to utter frankness.

"Surely you used to be in love with Barbara?"

"*I!* Good Lord, what put such an idea as that into your head? You're thinking of Ferris."

"I'm hardly likely to confuse the two. But I was so sure —"

"You were sure of a very big mistake then."

A wave of color had swept over her face, and to save her from embarrassment, he hastily changed the subject.

"Did you see that picture of Ferris in the paper the other day labelled 'Hero Ferris'?"

I've seen Poet Jones and Artist Smith, but I believe Hero Ferris is a shade worse. We have no patents of nobility, but our fearful and wonderful press does its best to make up for the lack."

"Who would ever have thought," she mused, "that he would be the one to perform — barring the Merrimac episode — almost the only spectacular act of heroism of the whole war?"

"Why not? He's earnest and fearless. Drawing-room cleverness isn't necessary to heroism."

"As if I cared for drawing-room cleverness! But I remember Captain Cartwright's saying once that he had the making of a Casabianca, and I suppose a certain amount of stupidity is necessary to produce that type."

"Don't belittle Ferris's achievement. He handled his torpedo-boat magnificently."

"Oh, I know. It was tremendously fine. I wrote and told him so, though he must be too much snowed under by celebrity to care about a note more or less."

"I wonder if Miss Thornhill wrote?"

"Oh no. She'd be afraid to."

"For fear of encouraging him? You think his becoming so distinguished hasn't softened her heart any?"

"How could it, if she didn't love him?"

"You are sure she didn't?"

"Oh, very sure."

"But sometimes you make mistakes about the state of people's affections."

"So it appears. But there's no doubt about *that*."

"Your old friend Mr. Fairchild is recommended for five numbers' advance for cable-cutting, I see."

"He's no friend of mine."

"Not since he failed in friendliness to the Mothers' Club? You are very unforgiving."

"I could forgive much larger things more easily. That happened to be a sort of touchstone. . . . But tell me, how does it feel to be a returning hero?"

His face fell.

"Don't laugh at my misfortune," he said.

"It isn't kind. It's not a thing to say much about, but don't you suppose I feel the disappointment keenly enough?"

"What *are* you talking about?"

"That the war should have come and gone, — perhaps the only one I shall ever have a chance at, — with all its golden opportunities, and all of them should have passed me by."

"How passed you by?"

"My application to go in with the Merri-mac was turned down. I had no chance to destroy an enemy's ship with a torpedo-boat, like Ferris. I wasn't at Manila Bay or at Santiago. I didn't even have the luck to be sent out in a launch to cut cables."

"But those things were not your fault."

"Possibly not."

"You went where you were sent."

"Of course."

"And did your whole duty."

"I hope so."

"It was only by an unlucky chance that your ship was away chasing a blockade-runner the day of the Santiago fight."

"There is pardon sometimes for the wicked, but never for the unlucky."

Sue was watching him with troubled, kindly eyes.

"I don't understand you," she said. "You are showing me a new side of yourself to-day. I didn't know you cared a rap for fame."

"I don't for myself," he replied. "But I wanted it to lay at your feet."

She started. When she spoke her voice was low and full of feeling.

"Don't you know that I am far prouder of what you *are* than of what anybody else has *done*?"

They had sat down on the slope of a big sand-hill which blotted out the view of the camp. Sue's hands lay idly in her lap; but McMasters, more restless apparently, leaned on one elbow and scooped out holes in the dry sand, which slid down from the edges and filled them up as fast as he hollowed them out. He stopped now and looked at her steadfastly.

"Are you just being kind, or —"

"Or what?" she prompted.

"I can't bear to spoil our friendship!" he burst out.

She looked bewildered again.

"Is there any earthly reason why you should?" she asked.

"I'm afraid, abjectly afraid," he confessed.

"I don't see anything to be afraid of," she said evenly.

"Help me, then."

The veil had fallen. His heart was in his eyes.

"What is it you wish me to say?"

Her voice was hardly above a whisper.

"That you've changed your mind."

"About what?"

"What you said that night—about second-hand men."

For an instant she looked dazed. Then, as the flood of memory swept over her, she gave a low cry, like that of a mother who finds a child in unsuspected pain.

"You poor, poor boy!" Her voice thrilled

tenderly. She laid her hand on his shoulder, and the tears swam in her eyes.

He possessed himself of the hand and laid it against his cheek.

“Who repeated that hideous phrase to you?” she cried, with dawning indignation.

“I heard it from your own dear lips,” he said. “I had left my overcoat behind —”

“Yes, I remember.”

“I turned around to come back for it, glad of an excuse to leave the others, glad of an excuse to get back to the blessed house that held you, hoping for the chance of another word with you, — Oh, you can’t guess how full of you I was! There was never any one like you in the world. You carried me off my feet. You were so beautiful, so brilliant, and so sweetly unconscious of it all, — so alive to the finger tips, so full of enthusiasm. I had not stopped to think of myself, — whether I was worthy or not, whether there was the slightest hope for me or not. The universe was simply full of *you*. And as I came around under the drawing-room windows, — they were

all wide open, the light was streaming out, — I could distinguish your voice among the others. I was walking slowly to finish my cigarette before I got to the door. I didn't intend to listen, but I couldn't help hearing what you said."

As he spoke, her face was tense with the pain of sympathy. She drew her hand away from him and pressed it with the other over her eyes for a moment, as though to shut out some too painful vision.

"Oh, how cruel it must have sounded!" she murmured.

"It was not cruel," he said gently. "It was true. You were perfectly right about it. But it tumbled me head over heels out of my fool's paradise. I could no more help loving you than I could help breathing, but I knew you were not for me, and that my only chance to be with you, to see you, and hear you, was to keep myself well in hand."

"You were very successful," she said.

"Miss Barbara used to let me talk about you to her by the hour. It was very nice

of her. If it hadn't been for that, I'm afraid I should have given myself away."

She made no reply. His power of articulate speech had outlasted hers. But he was at an end, too. His marvellous self-control was deserting him.

For a long moment they looked into each other's eyes — looked, and read the glowing message, — looked, while their hearts stood still with rapturous fear, — looked, till the heavens reeled and time and space melted away.

"Belovéd!" he whispered, as his arms closed around her.

CHAPTER XXV

THE Portland was the first of the vessels taking part in the battle of Manila Bay to be ordered home. The enthusiasm kindled by the war was still blazing, and every nerve was strained to make the welcome of the ship a fitting expression of it.

When she was reported off Sandy Hook, with her four-hundred-foot homeward-bound pennant floating from the main truck, every yacht, tugboat, and excursion steamer in New York harbor hastened to meet her and escort her to the anchorage in North River. Reckless sightseers in rowboats and sailboats courted death under the white bow of the cruiser. The people on the excursion boats crowded to the rail till the decks were steeply aslant and only a miracle prevented their capsizing. Flags and handkerchiefs fluttered, hats

waved, thousands of throats cheered themselves hoarse, steam whistles shrieked deafeningly, and brass bands tried vainly to make themselves heard above the din. The captains of the excursion boats ran as close as they dared to the sides of the man-of-war.

"That's him! That's him!" cried a chorus of jubilant sightseers, as they made out an officer on the bridge whose features were already familiar to them in newspaper cuts and magazine illustrations. "Welcome home, Captain Cartwright!"

"Why, thank you," said the officer, simply, doffing his cap, obviously surprised at the personalness of the greeting.

The great American populace were not content with this. Whom they love, they slap on the back. Being prevented by the stretch of water between them from expressing their admiration of Captain Cartwright in this manner, they conveyed the spirit of the act, at least, by addressing him as "Julius," calling him a "bully boy," informing him that he was the "real stuff," and could "have them

all," and assuring him that they "wouldn't do a thing to him" when they got him ashore. An inspired punster called out that he was "All-right as well as Cartwright," and the *bon-mot* was repeated and the changes rung on it till the flesh crept.

Familiarity of this sort was altogether new in Captain Cartwright's experience, and he was far from relishing it. He would have taken refuge in his cabin, had his presence not been absolutely required on the bridge for the bringing of his ship into port. His whole soul writhed under the vulgarity of it, till at last in utter disgust he exclaimed:—

"The good Lord, in His infinite mercy, may be able to forgive the Admiral for leading us into Manila Bay,—but *I* never can!"

The reporters got hold of the phrase and served it up with embellishments in the evening papers. Instead of hurting anybody's feelings, it seemed somehow to tickle the popular sense of humor. From having been merely an *ex officio* hero,—what the newspapers delighted to describe as "one of the

fighting captains of Manila Bay," — Captain Cartwright suddenly found himself the personal idol of seventy millions of his fellow-countrymen.

His speech at the banquet that night added to his popularity. The American public is convinced that naval and military heroes should be inarticulate, — not stupidly so, of course, but intelligently, and, as one may say, sympathetically inarticulate. So, when Captain Cartwright rose in response to the toast of the evening, and having said in a well modulated voice, "It is good to be back in God's country, and we thank you from our hearts for the warmth of the welcome you have given us," sat down again, the Citizens' Committee of One Hundred and their numerous guests went wild over him, and the morning papers grew eloquent in praise of his modesty and simple manliness.

The day following the arrival of the Portland was devoted to a great procession. The streets through which it passed were gayly decked with bunting. Every window along

the route seemed alive with faces. Temporary stands, with seats on bare boards selling at five dollars apiece, were full of enthusiastic sightseers effervescing with patriotism. Every inch of standing room on the sidewalk was packed, and the long line of police on either side of the street with difficulty held back the swaying masses.

There were cheers for the visiting governors and dapper state troops, cheers for the Civil War veterans, wild applause for the soldiers back from Cuba, with their rough field equipment, torn battle flags, and pitifully thinned ranks; but the frenzy of enthusiasm was saved for the detachment of brown-leggined blue-jackets in whose honor the celebration was held, and the very essence of its fury was concentrated on the quiet, middle-aged gentleman in full-dress naval uniform with cocked hat and epaulets, who rode in an open carriage at the right hand of the mayor.

The ways of returning heroes are various. Some are visibly elated to the point of hilarity.

Some are touched to tears. Some, trying to play the part appropriately, achieve woodenness instead of dignity. One would have said, had such a thing been possible, that this particular hero was utterly unconscious of occupying the center of the stage, and that the sentiment with which he regarded the whole spectacle was a mild and genial amusement.

They passed a living flag composed of school children dressed in red, white, and blue, singing the "Star-spangled Banner."

"Charming!" said the hero of the occasion, as he sat, hat in hand, to pass them.

But, to the disappointment of the mayor and the newspaper men, he wiped no tear from the corner of his eye. There was obviously none to wipe.

Then they came to a band of white-gowned young girls scattering flowers.

The hero picked up a rose that fell on his sleeve and fastened it in his buttonhole.

"This is quite overwhelming," he said to the mayor, but his voice did not tremble in the least.

Next, passing an open square, they came upon a chorus, five hundred strong, who greeted them with "Hail to the Chief."

"This appears to be a conspiracy to turn my head," said the hero, but his unemotional manner showed how little the conspiracy had succeeded.

Once only did he betray something warmer than polite and decorous appreciation of the efforts of others. As they approached the flag-decked front of an up-town hotel, he spoke a few words to the mayor and began to scan the windows and balconies with something like eagerness.

"Oh, there he is! There's Gran'fadder!" cried a high, childish voice.

At the same instant the Captain saw them and waved his hat. His wife's handkerchief fluttered enthusiastically in response, and the child's hand, unsteady with excitement, hurled a bunch of violets toward the carriage, which fell far short of the mark.

"Oh, he didn't get them!" cried the boy.

"Never mind, sonny, he shall," said a good-

natured voice from the crowd; and the little bunch of flowers was passed along, high over men's heads, till it reached its destination.

Hardly a score of people caught enough of the incident to guess that the excited little sailor boy who threw the flowers was the "hero's" grandson, and the gray-haired lady who held the child on the rail of the balcony was his wife. The newspapers did not get hold of it at all. Yet, had they but known it, the five minutes during which he was in sight of that particular balcony were the only ones of the day when his heart beat faster than its wont.

That evening, after having shown themselves for a short time at the banquet tendered by the city to the enlisted men of the Portland, Captain and Mrs. Cartwright retired to their rooms at the hotel, leaving word at the office that the Captain was resting and on no account to be disturbed. The experience of the last thirty-six hours had taught them the inadequacy of such precautions, and they hastened to turn out the gas in their sit-

ting-room, for the discouragement of any enterprising reporter who might be lurking about their door in search of copy, as well as for the better enjoyment of the firelight.

They drew their arm-chairs up in front of the grate, a glowing center from which venturesome rays strayed out capriciously into the shadowy room. The Captain lighted his cigar and leaned back, luxuriously watching the play of the yellow flames above the red lumps of coal.

"This is the first peaceful moment I've had since we got into port," he remarked.

Several minutes elapsed before he spoke again.

"You observe that row of silver gimcracks on the table that were presented to me at City Hall this morning by the various municipal boards, — aldermen, police commissioners and the rest?"

"Yes, you showed them to me before dinner."

"It was not pleasant for a decent man to have to accept such things, knowing that

they had been paid for in the first place by the dive-keepers of the Tenderloin."

"Julius!"

"Well, weren't they? But there is one of them that I shall always regard as an interesting souvenir, — that two-handled tooth mug second from the end."

"You might be more gracious," she protested. "They did their best."

He leaned forward to knock the ashes off his cigar against the edge of the grate.

"I don't remember what board it represents. The inscription will probably tell. But the member who was chosen to present it, who came forward beaming to make his little speech, was — you would never guess!"

"Who?" she begged.

"John C. O'Meara!"

"No!"

"Yes. He has been rising in the world too."

"Julius, what did you do?"

"What would you expect under the circumstances? 'Captain,' said he, 'we've had

our differences, but I hope you bear no malice. We're all Americans together to-day, and I want to shake the hand of the grandest sailor that ever trod the quarter-deck.' "

Mrs. Cartwright beamed magnanimity.

"And what did you do, Julius?" she repeated.

He smiled at her quizzically.

"Do?" he bantered. "Why, what could I do? Wasn't I in the power of the Philistines? . . . I wrung his hand most cordially."

"Thank heaven!" she ejaculated.

"I made a few appropriate remarks, and he was obliged to blow his nose repeatedly to carry off his superfluous emotion."

"Poor man, perhaps he isn't so bad after all! Even a Tammany politician seems to have some patriotism if you can only get at it."

"Patriotism!" he echoed scornfully. "Emotional poppycock!"

"Don't be unjust, dear," she urged. "All

the world can't have your temperament, you know. There *is* such a thing as genuine feeling which is not concealed."

He made no reply, but gazed contemplatively at the cigar between his middle and index fingers.

"If you had seen, as I have to-day, strong men with tears coursing down their cheeks, women holding up little children that they might be able to say in later years that they had seen you —"

"Don't you know that that same hysterical mob may be abusing me like a pickpocket in six months?" he interrupted. "They don't rend their hero limb from limb nowadays when they grow tired of him. But they do something crueller. They turn him over to the comic weeklies."

"Not unless he does something to deserve it," she pleaded.

"But he's *bound* to do something to deserve it — from their point of view," he assured her, warming to the argument. "The great American public throws itself on its face and cries,

‘ Let me lick the dust from the boots of this adorable demigod ! ’ The returning hero says, ‘ This is exceedingly kind of you, but there is really some mistake about it. I’m *not* a demigod, you know.’ But the public only licks the harder, crying, ‘ What a modest deity ! ’ And then all at once, when it finds out he is human, it rails at him for an impostor and turns him over to the cartoonist. And when the cartoonist is through with him, he drops into oblivion — and is thankful to get there.”

“ Don’t try to spoil my pleasure in it all.”

“ Heaven forbid ! I am trying to save you from heart-burning when the inevitable sequel comes.”

“ It never occurred to me, Julius, that the popular enthusiasm over your return would always remain at white heat. I didn’t suppose you would be greeted with cheers to your dying day whenever you set foot in the street, or be mobbed by thousands, whose highest ambition was to shake your hand — ”

“ I should hope not.”

“ No, it would be a great bore if it lasted.

But while it is here, it is genuine. And under it all, there will be something that *does* last. And that something I suppose one may as well call fame."

"With a capital F? If it had struck me at two-and-twenty, I might have thought so."

"Julius, nobody was ever as indifferent to praise as you appear to be. It's an affectation."

"I am not in the least indifferent to discriminating praise, my dear," he smiled at her, — "yours first, then that of my brother officers at home and abroad. And I should value it from intelligent civilians too," he added, with elaborate large-mindedness. "But the fulsome flattery in the newspapers, with its gross exaggerations, its ignorances and inaccuracies, and its execrable bad taste, is a thing to make one feel ashamed, not proud."

"You should credit them with their good intentions, dear. They are doing the best they know how. Probably nobody was ever praised for what most deserved praise in his life, but if the right man gets about the right amount

of admiration, the exact distribution of it over his career is immaterial."

"Ah, now you're treading on the edge of great thoughts. But aren't these the same newspapers and the same sheeplike populace who poured the vials of their wrath on me when I sank the Bell Buoy? Wasn't I doing my duty then just as much as at Manila Bay? Is their praise any more discriminating than their blame?"

"Very much," she asserted stoutly, but he only laughed at her.

"Dear lady, be not deceived," he said. "This is not fame. It is only newspaper notoriety, — not very different in kind from that bestowed on the last successful prize fighter, or the multi-millionnaire's daughter who marries a decayed foreign nobleman."

"Julius," she cried, really pained, "in your dislike of processions and public functions, are you in danger of forgetting that it *was* a great battle, and that you *did* have a prominent and highly honorable part in it, and that — whether you care for it or not — your name

has become a part of the history of our country? ”

“ Lake Erie was a great battle, and Perry was in command. But do you happen, by any chance, to remember the names of his captains? ”

She did not, but she refused to admit the analogy.

He sat up and tossed his cigar stump into the grate.

“ Have you reflected,” he said, willing to change the subject, “ that the wedding is over by this time? ”

“ Sue’s and McMasters’s? You are right, and I let the hour pass without thinking of it. But I wish them joy with all my heart.”

“ And I too,” he added.

“ The wedding was to be under the eucalyptus trees on the hill behind her father’s country house. Sue said that grove had always made her think of a church more than any real one did. Sue couldn’t even get married just like any one else. I sometimes wish she were a little less original. It borders on eccentricity.”

"Oh, Sue's all right! It seems to me rather a pretty idea. And think how the roses and lilies and ivy geraniums are blooming now in California! But Barbara —"

"Don't speak to me of Barbara! It breaks my heart."

"Why shouldn't the child be happy in her own way instead of ours?"

"*Is* she happy though? I always had an idea she was in love with John McMasters."

He made a gesture of impatience.

"Why suppose that? It cheapens the whole episode. I don't believe Barbara was ever in love with *anybody*. She belongs to another world."

Mrs. Cartwright shook her head sadly.

"It's true that she doesn't belong to *this* world any more. It is awful to think of her having taken the vows that shut her out like iron gates from all that is worth while."

"Standards of the worth while differ."

"Is *anything* worth while?" she cried, with sudden impatience.

"Ah, who shall say?" he mused.

“Gran’mudder!” murmured a sleepy voice in the next room, and they both sprang up to go to him.

“There’s our answer,” whispered Mrs. Cartwright, as they stood looking down at the child, who had gone off to sleep again before they reached him.

He smiled understandingly.

“If Elizabeth were here —” Mrs. Cartwright began, when they had resumed their seats by the fire.

The shadow of their sorrow fell over them both, and the sentence was left unfinished.

It was the Captain who took it up.

“Ah, if Elizabeth were here,” he said, “she would enjoy it all æsthetically, — appreciate the humor of it, too. But I don’t believe she would be dazzled much.”

“She would be as proud of you as I am,” her mother asserted.

“Of me, perhaps, but not of the celebration. Surely, there is a difference?”

“Julius,” she said, “I couldn’t change your mental attitude toward it all if I wished to, —

and I'm by no means sure that I do. But for myself—" She paused. Her voice trembled a little, and there were tears in her eyes. "For myself I don't despise the love of all those hundreds of thousands of commonplace men and women, lifted for the moment out of the humdrum of their lives—by you, Julius, by *you*. And I shouldn't despise it, if I knew they were going to transfer it to somebody else to-morrow."

She waited a moment and added, —

"This has been the proudest day of my life."

He leaned forward and took her hand, lifting it tenderly to his lips.

"The proudest day of mine," he said, "was when I won you for my wife, and the next proudest—" he paused and chuckled—"well, I think it was when my father bought me a pair of red-topped boots!"

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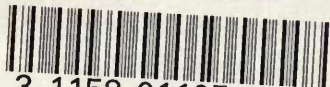
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